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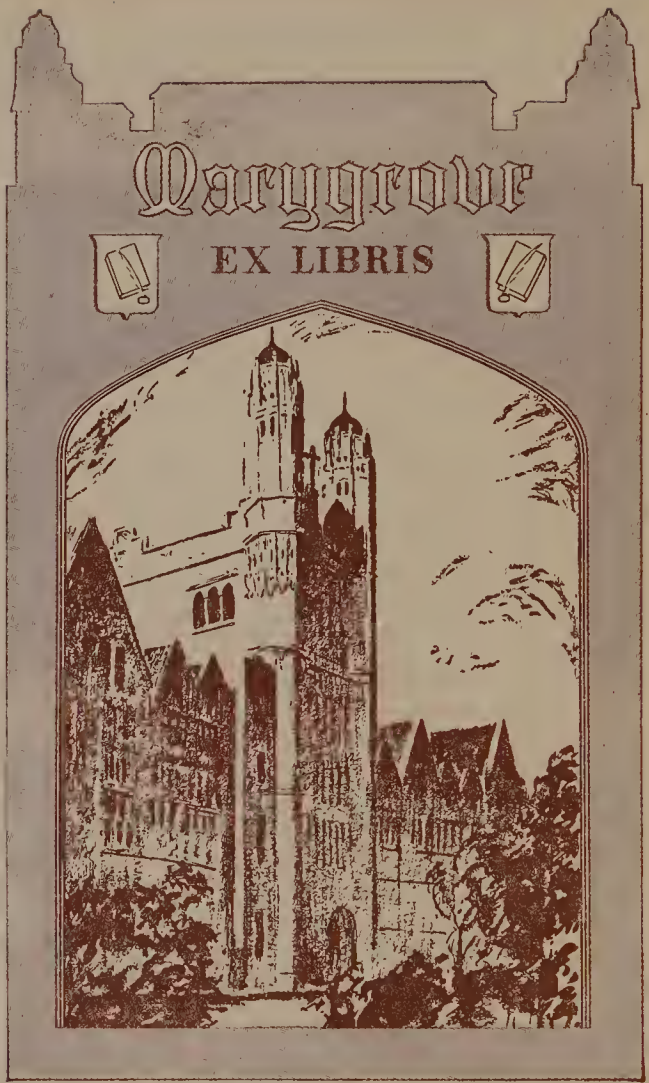
The Barons of the Virginia Rivers

by

Cyril Arthur Player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The famous "Family Group at Mt. Vernon," painted by Edward Savage, which includes George and Martha Washington; the latter's grandchildren, George Washington Parke Custis and Nelly Custis, whom Washington adopted; and Billy Lee, servant. On the table lies the plan of the "Capital City."

The Barons of the Virginia Rivers

The Story of America's Transition from Feudalism to Democracy

by

Cyril Arthur Player

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PREFACE

MORE than two centuries ago, and years before this nation was born, there developed in certain of the colonies, notably in Virginia, a baronial civilization and a benevolent feudalism the like of which has not been seen anywhere else in the world.

The Baron had his vast estate, his slaves, his indentured servants; his barony was a little kingdom, self-contained and all but wholly independent. This strange age, a mixture of pomp and makeshift, produced a society which, out of its own needs, changed the Baron to gentleman-planter, and from gentleman-planter to citizen. The fruition of this strange process came when the British Parliament challenged the colonies. The Barons and the heirs of the Barons became the arch-patriots of a new era, and out of the feudalism emerged a democracy which, in its form as in its achievements, has commanded the attentive interest of the world.

The story of those early days, the manners, the men, the women, what they did, how they lived, and the steps by which the transition from feudalism to freedom came about, is the subject of this work.

Among the products of the ripened baronial age was George Washington, whose bicentennial, in 1932, will bring hundreds of thousands to the capital. The plan for the City of Washington was the last gift of the colonial patriots to the new nation, and has resulted in a monument to the history and progress of the American people. The countryside made famous by the Washington era will be part of the pilgrimage as it is already for those who seek its hundred shrines.

The task of exploring this period in our history was assigned to Mr. Player by The Detroit News more than two years ago. It was felt that an examination of this astonishing age would provide an entertaining narrative for The News' large family of readers. Every opportunity was given Mr. Player by The News for prolonged research as well as for actual study of the territory in which the events occurred.

Added to this contribution of time and encouragement must be chronicled the generosity of scores of Virginians, who opened their homes and their records to assist the student in his task.

The series of articles published in The Detroit News during the winter of 1928-29 attracted the attention of Detroit educators. At the request of Frank Cody, Superintendent of Schools, the articles, somewhat rounded out with accessory material, are now republished in a form suitable for reference and preservation.

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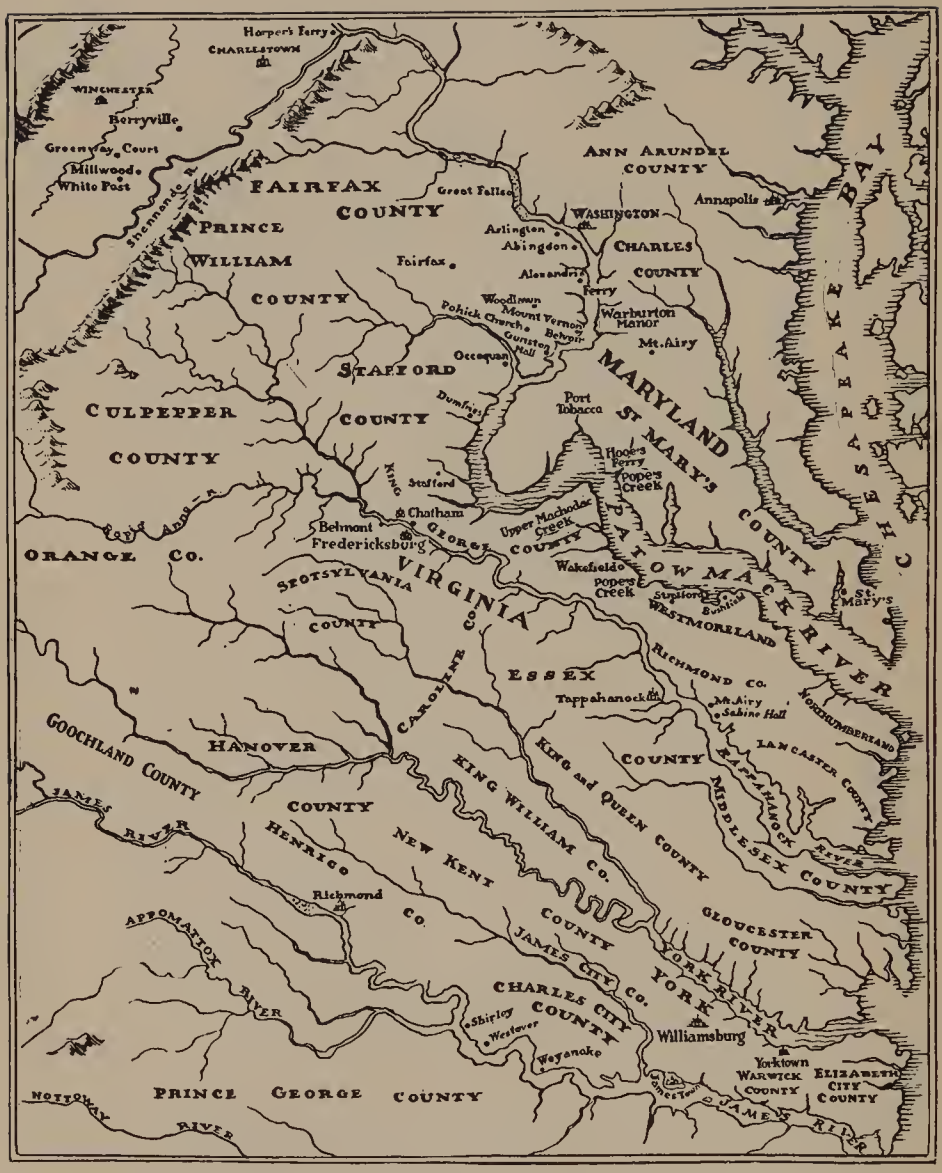
*The following pictures were obtained from the sources named: From United States Air Service (through Underwood & Underwood): Air view of Mt. Vernon (Copyright), Washington today; from Underwood & Underwood: Wythe House, Abingdon, Old Canal in wider reaches (Copyright), Francis Scott Key house; from Pacific & Atlantic: Stratford; from Virginia State Chamber of Commerce: Jail window, Williamsburg, John Rolfe House; from Chas. H. Callahan's "Washington, the Man and the Mason": Lord Fairfax, Greenway Court, George Mason, Mary Washington, Will's Creek; from Mary G. Powell's "The History of Old Alexandria": Washington's survey of Alexandria; from Charles Moore's "The Family Life of George Washington" (Houghton): Martha Parke Custis; from National Photo Co.: Gunston Hall, general view of Mt. Vernon, Woodlawn, First Monument to Washington.



Map of Virginia in colonial days, based on an adaptation of Jefferson and Fry's map of 1751 by Isabella Farr Brockaway. It represents the Virginia known to George Washington and his contemporaries. In preparing it for this book, all places of significance referred to in the course of the narrative have been inserted, together with others helpful to identification. Only places of the colonial period, however, are included.

INTRODUCTION

THE WORLD THAT WAS

THE WORLD rocked from the northern tip of Scandinavia to the shifting frontiers of the African and Asiatic continents.

That was all the world.

Men knew, by hearsay, of the Orient and the Indies. The Americas were not; except for a broken outline of sea washing on rocks. Maps were drawn by kings with the sword-point, pricking here a spurt of race and there a pin-point of ambition.

The time was the Sixteenth Century, when men worshiped God so ardently that they butchered their fellow-men for love of Him. An age of character, nonetheless, when man did, for all his limitations of time, reveal a genius rarely paralleled. There was strength behind cruelty; daring behind persecution; tremendous arrogance behind a man or an office.

There were the common people, everywhere: not very happy.

The people never had been very happy. They were happier than two centuries before; happier than two centuries hence, when philosophy became audible in the market places and indicted centuries of mental medievalism. But they were not happy. In the Twelfth Century unhappiness began in the stomach; in the Fifteenth Century it had touched the nerves; in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth, intellectual curiosity awakening, it acted wholly on the mind, suddenly become sensitive to self-interest and an inquisitiveness about a thing called "power," long beheld afar and suffered, never before taken in the untrained hands, and experienced.

At the top men killed, as they said, for the love of God; at the bottom they killed because they loved themselves. The quick glimpse of property was too much for them, just as the imperfect glimpse of a distorted Paradise intoxicated to frenzy those who ruled them. A strange world, it was, at the moment when first a red lightning-streak twitched along the western horizon of the Americas, dark, mysterious, a fitful and inscrutable coast-line which had neither beginning nor ending nor shape; neither history nor instancy.

Elizabeth sat on the throne of England, expediently Protestant. Philip II sat on the throne of Spain, violently Catholic. William of Nassau — "The Silent" — Prince of Orange, ruled the Netherlands, shrewdly and heroically Protestant; Henry II, son of Catherine of Medici, ruled France, craftily Catholic. For eighty years the Netherlands struggled against Spain. For thirty years religious wars ravaged Germany. Within France, Catholics and Huguenots decimated each other. Within England, martyred bishops and a martyred Queen of Scots made contrary ghosts to disturb the peace of the realm.

Europe lived in a state of battle, murder and sudden death. Assassination came with the dawn and the night brought the fires of the hosts whose midday tramping shook the continent as they marched across it.

Over the seas there was a coast-line; nothing more. Columbus sighted it and offered a New World to Spain. Verazzano found it and conferred a new Empire on France. Cabot journeyed thither and placed the flag of England on a new and unmapped continent. The bitter rivalry crossed the ocean.

Intellectually, the world was at exploding point. The grandeur of the creative age usually associated with the name of Elizabeth set a match to the powder of man's imagination; the past became beautiful in the poesy of suddenly released speech; the world felt itself touched with the heroic and men sought to add fame to new legends.

The continent could not contain all the dreams. Ambitions jostled each other all the way up to the footstool of the throne. Ideas struck sparks from each other and fires burned within the souls of men as red and scorching as the fires of the battle-fields.

Out of this magnificent age of explosive renaissance, the old world cast its bolder dreamers over the seas into the new world. The itching possibility of great drama and greater fortune challenged the restless spirit of an awakened day. So, all these things went with the adventurers—ambition, cupidity, knowledge, inherited animosities, courage and a newly-painted vision of the capacity of mankind. It was the musketry of ideas that rattled up and down the American coast . . . and rattles yet.

Spain grasped at the luxuriant south. The baffled French went to the cold North whence, in time, they pushed down to meet the Virginian English in that terrible war which was

the baptism of a new civilization. Each nation claimed all, and ruled all within the carry of its gun.

These are generalizations; but the text-books are filled with the incidents of the struggles; mostly biased. Freed minds were working out demonstrations of political society. It was a New World everywhere, Europe as well as America; but liberty needed space.

The Duke of Alva's "bloody tribunal" at Brussels; the defeat of Mary, Queen of Scots; the death of Conde at Jarnac; the massacre of St. Bartholomew; the siege of Leyden; the Catholic League; the Union of Utrecht; and the united travail of all these and other like events brought forth a sequel, whose manifestation may have been the wake of a vessel which bore the followers and agents of bold-faced Sir Walter Raleigh to the western horizon of the unknown. They sought, perplexedly, wealth and, if convenient, freedom; freedom to gather wealth; wealth to make freedom strong and luxurious. It was the expansive phase of the new egotism.

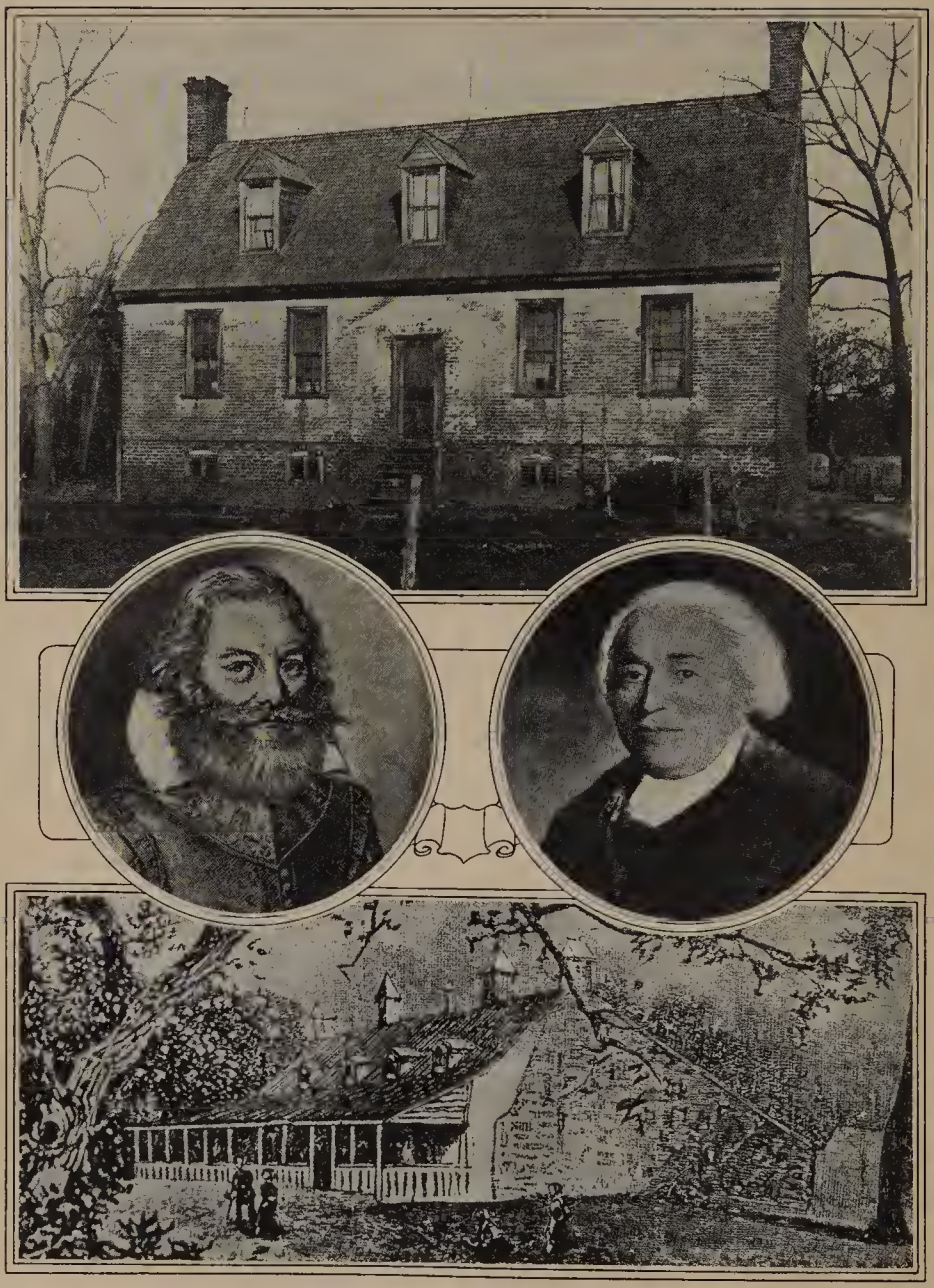
Raleigh's death is one of the tragedies of ungrateful history. But he has to be listed with ten thousand, whose name chanced not to be Raleigh, but whose courage and purpose were one with his. Raleigh died, on the block; William of Orange died, by assassination; Sir Philip Sidney, at Zutphen; Mary of Scotland died, on the scaffold; Henry VIII, of France, died, by a dagger-stroke; Philip II, of Spain, died on a convulsive, lingering death-bed, but piously. Even Elizabeth died!

But the aroma of grandeur bathed all, while the splendor of dawn gilded the magnificence of unparalleled awakening. The gesture of dying, as of living, was superb. It was the versatile age.

The French founded Quebec. The English built huts on the fringe of Virginia. Lord Baltimore sent Leonard Calvert to establish Maryland. English religious dissidents set an iron foot on the Massachusetts coast. The rival faiths had crossed the ocean, to battle pitifully against the spacious age which was to absorb without destroying them. Who founded the new nation? Not the fanatics of New England, nor those of Maryland, nor those, if there were any, of the Virginia tidewater. First, environment conquered all these; and when they, already conquered, again conquered themselves, liberty became citizenship, and thence a people was born.

It had taken Christianity fifteen centuries to become indi-

vidual. During all that time it had been proprietary. For centuries it had remained a fearful superstition and was locked up warily in the hearts of mankind. When, in the great marshalling of dogma, it rocked the Old World, the significance crept upward into the minds of men. Faith, realized, meant spiritual democracy. The question became intimate and individual. Thought, long slumbering, asked a question: If this be so, then am I free? Men being men, the application was material and realistic. The event, lasting over a groaning century of bloodshed, shot through with the gold of character, was epochal. The era, of which today is the fruition, was cradled there.



Upper: The oldest brick house in Virginia on land given by Powhatan to the son of Pocahontas and John Rolfe. Left: Capt. John Smith. Right: Thomas, Lord Fairfax, George Washington's first employer. Lower: Greenway Court, home of Lord Fairfax.

CHAPTER I

THE GIFT OF THE KING

THE King issued a writ.

Five million, seven hundred thousand acres of land fell into the maw of his friend. Both may have been the worse for drink at the time. But the scratch of the pen was there; and so was the land.

Neither had seen it. It existed dimly across the stormy Atlantic, whence came the growing legends of Capt. John Smith; of a forgotten artist on one of Raleigh's expeditions, named John White; of "Walter Russell, Doctor of Physicke; Thomas Momford, Gentleman, and Anas Todkill, Soldier;" of Patowmeck Town with 200 highly painted fighting men; of the newly-claimed King's River (James), Prince's River (York), Queen's River (Rappahannock) and Elizabeth River, which is none other than the Potomac itself.

Out of the writ grew an empire. Out of the empire came a feudalism unlike anything seen in the world before. Out of the feudalism was born a vision. The very Barons of the new world wrote the testament of democracy. The strangest story of all history. The swiftest, for it takes scarce two centuries from the scratched signature on the royal writ to the bold challenge of Independence. The most enduring, since we are here to prove it.

* * *

The feudal system produced, among other phenomena, George Washington. He was the consummation of it. He was cradled on the very threshold of history and belonged, unmistakably, to two worlds. While his benefactor, Thomas, Lord Fairfax, bore the weight of his 92 years to an angry grave, Washington bore toward immortality the standard of rebellion.

While the old royalist in Greenway Court broke his heart over the vanishing past, Washington broke his over the most desperate army that ever won a victory for a magnificent future.

Washington's logical mind interpreted feudalism as nobility; its expression, character. He, and those with him, saw the goal larger than the system. "Life, liberty and the pursuit

of happiness" was gloriously theirs; theirs to have, but, if it was to be retained, not their to restrict. Privileges brought duties. The spacious age of the Barons had refined the soul of the new race.

Stupidity pricked at idealism, and the flag was unfurled at the mast-head of a new nation. The younger generation, inheritors of feudalism, laid the foundations for the destruction of the old and the erection of the new.

George Washington saw all that, feudalism and democracy both. His life spans the ripening of the one and the birth of the other. A huge social evolution rushed through his days; history compressed itself and packed the hours. Less than four years hence, in 1932, the nation marks the bicentennial of his birth at Bridge's Creek, now called Wakefield. It is not merely the birth of a man, but the crucial phase of a miracle, that is to be celebrated. The world scarcely has seen the like.

* * *

The King issued a writ. This time it was King James the First. He gave, out of hand, South Virginia to the London Company. Two years later, in 1609, the company was reorganized for larger action, and the King obligingly renewed the gift. The grant extended 200 miles north, and 200 miles south of Old Point Comfort, and westward to the Pacific.

The King issued a writ. This time it was Charles I, promising to the first Lord Baltimore the territory now constituting the states of Maryland and Delaware.

The King issued a writ. This time it was Charles II, certifying to his friends, Lords Arlington and Culpeper, the gift of the Northern Neck of Virginia.

* * *

Far in the background is an uninquisitive Norseman, Herjulfsen, who sighted these shores. More distinct is the figure of Leif Ericson, who landed well within the patent of the London Company's Virginia grant, six centuries before the coming of the first colonists.

Little more than a century after Columbus, came the first colonists of the London Company. They were, for the most part, worthless adventurers. Wingfield, first governor of the colony at Jamestown, was either a rascal or History squabbles flippantly over his character, whether he did embezzle the penny whittles and the sack destined for Communion or whether he was indeed a good, grave man unsuited for the extravagant realism of the new land. In any event he passed out,

leaving only a dubious character and a name whose first part—Edward Maria—few books trouble to record. Scarcely more wasted then than now is the spot where they landed. James Towne became one of those ghost cities of the Seventeenth Century, places of which Thomas Jefferson later said: "The laws have said there shall be towns; but Nature has said there shall not."

The great figure of relief in this first reckless group of discards is Capt. John Smith, whose courage and energy built the "town" and whose force of character somehow held his associates in some sort of check. Smith lives large and impressive yet. His map still is eloquent. His "True Relation of such occurrences and accidents of noate as hath hapned in Virginia etc" continues to throw over a distant day a virile instancy and significance. His courses may be conjured on creeks and along waterways. His name speaks suggestively at a hundred spots within reach of the modern highway. He was the first manifestation of what was to become known as "the American spirit."

Smith landed on the James River 13 years before the Pilgrims came to Plymouth. A year later, 1608, he explored the Potomac. There follow picturesque names, heavy with incident: Harry Spelman, Capt. Samuel Argoll and Capt. Henry Fleet. Fleet it was who met Leonard Calvert, and his two ships, the Ark and the Dove, when they reached Chesapeake Bay in 1634 to assume the Baltimore grant.

But between the coming of Smith in the south and the coming of Calvert to the north, a momentous year is placed. It is 1619. On July 30 of that year the first legislative body ever constituted in Virginia met at Jamestown.

Among other matters it decided simply that there must be no taxes laid on the people without their consent, given by their representatives.

That was to become important. But so was something else. During the same year England sent out upwards of 1,200 colonists, among them 90 carefully-selected young women, to be sold as wives to the planters, at a price, to the London Company, of $75 worth of tobacco. King James the First, doubtless anxious to make some practical contribution to so notable an experiment, added to the shipments of immigrants, with a characteristic touch of Stuart genius, a hundred felons, jail-vagabonds and the like.

Nor was this all. In this year, also, a Dutch trading vessel "with an iron nose," brought to Jamestown 20 Negroes who were sold as slaves for life, in distinction from the felons who were merely indentured for a term of years.

These three things are the fundamental elements in the whole story of American evolution up to the close of the War of Independence. In part they run on through the middle of the Nineteenth Century. One problem remains even today. But for consideration here, it is noted that an essential of feudalism, in the form of slaves and indentured servants for the great land lords, came to the colonies, and found there a democratic fundamental already laid down, that there be no taxation without representation. Strange, how these three things worked to the same end, side by side. From them came the large-minded leaders of the new nation.

* * *

This is not a history. A history would analyze each square inch of the great colorful tapestry that pictures the romance of the North American Continent. It is a tapestry to fill the eye and the mind, with various threads, whose design is wrought from the lives and deeds of many.

Run over only a few of the names as they may occur to you: Leif Ericson, Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, Cabot, Cortereal, Ponce de Leon, Varrazzanti, Cartier, Robertval, De Soto, Ribault, Melendez, De Gourgues, Champlain, Frobisher, Drake, Raleigh, John Smith, Wingate, Lord Delaware, Pocahontas, Hudson, Leonard Calvert and Margaret Brent, who became his executrix; "King" Carter and Robert "the Councillor" whom Reynolds grandly painted; the gorgeously pathetic figure of Thomas, Lord Fairfax, and the more odious one of Sir William Berkeley; Kieft, Stuyvesant, Elders Brewster and Robinson, Roger Williams, Van Twiller, Governors Wyatt and Harvey of Virginia, Gov. Shirley, Nathaniel Bacon of the rebellion; Culpeper the waster, and Arlington the profligate; George Fox the Quaker, Oglethorpe the well-disposed; William Penn, Dinwiddie, LaSalle, Lord Bellamont, Braddock, George Washington, Richard Henry Lee, Ben Franklin, George Mason, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, Col. John Carlyle.

Where to stop such a record and how many skipped in the making of it! Who knows these men and their contemporaries knows the most thrilling narrative ever unfolded, even though it happens to be our own. And when this list be done, there is another stretching to our own time. The fulfillment of empire

is a story to which this, and all those named above, form a prologue which is to be sketched here, partly for its inherent significance, partly for the strangeness of it, and partly because the crowding days push it steadily back into the shadows of the vanished frontier.

* * *

The spirit of exploitation was the impulse to the New World, but the spirit of revolt peopled it. The Pilgrims came to Plymouth in revolt against one form of intolerance and the Roman Catholics who came with Calvert were revolting against another form of intolerance. The Cavaliers who fled from Cromwell were in revolt against the particular form of intolerance which hurt them. Those who sought to fulfill Oglethorpe's dream in Georgia sought relief from intolerance.

When Charles II, recognizing the writ the first Charles issued to his attorney-general, Sir Robert Heath, bestowed the Carolinas on the Earl of Clarendon, General Monk (Duke of Albemarle), Lords Berkeley, Craven and Ashley, Sir George Cartaret, Sir John Colleton and Sir William Berkeley, governor of Virginia, the petition for the grant composed by these worthies declared themselves "excited by a laudable and pious zeal for the propagation of the Gospel" and so asked for land "inhabited by some barbarous people who have no knowledge of God."

Tolerance, like liberty, is a word that suffers much from those who worship it. Even the radical becomes conservative defending his past victories. Tolerance, defending itself, instantly becomes tyranny, and thrives only on the offensive.

In general, the sought for liberty of conscience became painfully narrow. Thus grew up the intense rivalry between Massachusetts and Virginia which persisted down to the Civil War. Intolerance showed itself least, perhaps, in Virginia; the contrast between life south of the Potomac and life north of it is very marked.

* * *

Ten years before Leonard Calvert, of the Baltimore family, sailed up the Potomac to Piscataway Bay, which is above Mt. Vernon, on the Maryland side, but geographically is opposite that estate, the London Company, in South Virginia, had been dissolved and its Virginian lands had reverted to the crown. That brought Sir William Berkeley as governor. At first he ruled wisely, but after his return to power at the

end of the Cromwellian era in England, let his private interests corrupt his sense of service.

Calvert had returned to the mouth of the river to found St. Mary's, another vanished city. Berkeley struggled to compel the growth of Jamestown. Both men had difficult populations. The decree of tolerance in what is now Maryland had attracted Protestants, and tolerance did not work so well in practice as had been hoped. Nevertheless Calvert established the manorial system, by which the holder of a certain acreage became Lord of the Manor and sold, leased or sub-leased to the "yeomen" portions of his manorial holdings.

Even today the sizeable neck of land between the Wicomico and the Potomac is largely held by one man, whose home on the hills. Mt. Victoria, overlooks a model estate of 15,000 acres.

The Lord of the Manor was the law of his land, and the supreme court for disputes between the Lord of the Manor and the Proprietor was the Proprietor himself. It is entertaining to read the laws by which the Court Leet, the lower court, was governed. The following is taken from an old statute of early Maryland as indicating those who were brought before a discerning bench:

"Such as have double measure, and buy by the great and sell by the less. Such as haunt taverns and no man knoweth where they live. Such as sleep by day and watch by night and fare well and have nothing."

The relationship between the Proprietor and the Manor was distinctly medieval. Transfer of property was accomplished by an oath of fealty and often by the breaking of a twig, each side retaining a portion. Many of the early records have become lost or destroyed, but nevertheless from the Lords Baltimore all titles in Maryland descend. The story of them is important because, as travel became necessary early in the Eighteenth Century and men journeyed from Southern Virginia to Philadelphia, New York, or even Boston, there were developed chains of hospitality for the wayfarer, quite independent of the occasional and unsatisfactory "ordinary" which, indeed, did not come into existence until a certain beaten trail was developed to justify it.

Men crossed the rivers by ferries or in some cases, where the stream was narrow, by a floating bridge, and made their way to the home of some acquaintance. George Washington, as may appear later, scorned the ferry after the Mt. Vernon

days had set in, but went across in his barge to "neighbor Digges," at Warburton Manor House, where usually he tarried a bit. After that it was difficult for him to pass Mt. Airy, the seat of Benedict Calvert.

His pauses there when taking Mrs. Washington's son, John Parke Custis, to school at Annapolis, and the lad's own frequent stops there going and coming, produced the marriage between John and Eleanor Calvert.

The floating bridge was made of logs fastened together and covered with planks, the whole anchored to either shore. Any undue weight, as of a carriage, plunged the bridge well below the surface, and even a pedestrian could not make a very dry crossing.

* * *

In the early days, those of Leonard Calvert in Maryland and Berkeley in Jamestown, these settlements were widely separated both in a social and physical sense. The first settlers along the Potomac on the Virginia side had more ready access to the Maryland neighbors than to the southern colonies of their own government. In particular the Cavaliers, many of whom came out on Berkeley's invitation, pushed over north from the James, across the York, the Rappahannock and eventually into that chosen Northern Neck of Virginia which was to see so fine a flower of the baronial life of the New World.

Communication with these adventuring settlers was not easy. The chief land route was the Indian trail which, coming up from the far South, traversed the counties of New Kent, King William, Caroline and Spotsylvania, and reached the Rappahannock some three miles below Fredericksburg. It crossed the river into Stafford near Falmouth, on whose heights today Gari Melchers, Michigan artist, has his home, Belmont, while directly overlooking the trail itself is the lordly home of the great Fitzhugh family, Chatham.

After crossing the Rappahannock the trail divided. One branch went northeast over Hoecake Ridge through the counties of King George and Westmoreland, reaching the Potomac at famous Hooe's Ferry. The other, possibly main branch, went north through Stafford and Prince William, crossing the Potomac at Alexandria from West's Ferry to Addison's in Maryland.

Hooe's Ferry originated with Rice Hooe, who came to Virginia in 1621, his descendants settling south of Mathias Point in 1715. The Maryland landing to which Hooe, when

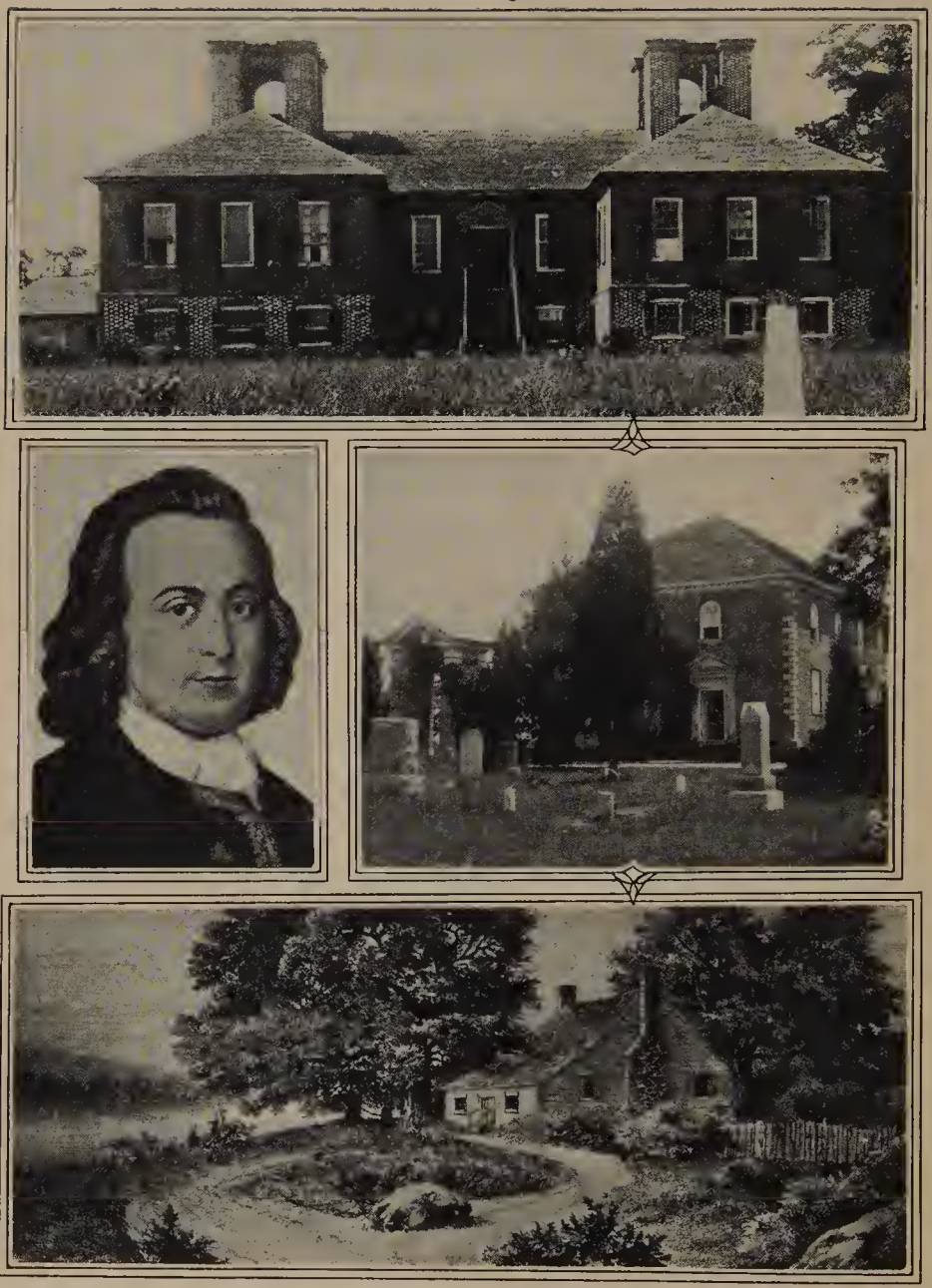
willing, conveyed passengers was near Pope's Creek (not to be confused with Pope's Creek on the Virginia side).

Washington used Hooe's Ferry, crossing from Mt. Vernon to Maryland in his barge, riding or driving down to the Ferry and so back into Virginia and a quick road to his relatives near Wakefield and the legislature at Williamsburg. The route around the many creeks and inlets on the Virginia side of the Potomac was tedious.

The Indian trails mentioned became the post roads, and gained the distinction of being called the "King's Highways." They were literally the only roads and over them the chief figures of that time, including Washington, passed on business and pleasure. Of that later. The rivers naturally formed the chief highways and did so until the coming of the railroad, subsequent to the decadence of the baronial system. The creeks are numerous, and estates chose usually to place themselves so that water formed a two or three-sided frontier, thus cutting down the cost and trouble of fencing. As will be seen the shores of the rivers formed an unbroken succession of vast estates, for which the waterways were the links of communication.

All of the first two centuries of history bases itself on the rivers. Even so late as the assassination of Lincoln the river was the first thought of his slayer. John Wilkes Booth crossed the City of Washington to the Anacostia River and was guided towards Port Tobacco, Maryland, but paused at Bryantown for Dr. Mudd to treat his injured leg. Eventually he made Pope's Creek, set out by night in a rowboat for the Virginia shore but, to his chagrin, found himself back in Maryland near Nanjemoy instead of at Upper Machodoc Creek across the river. Finally he crossed and got to Cedar Grove, hurried south of the Rappahannock and there met his death.

The rivers are the life stream of the nation's history and on their shores rises the fabric of this story, whatever it may be. It begins with a paradox and ends with a prophesy. Up to this point it is merely the story of the gift of a king and the unperceived consequences of a planting of civilization. A few ants came out and looked things over. They began by sowing a home and in the end reaped a revolution.



Upper: Stratford, home of the Lees, birthplace of Robert E. Lee. Left: George Mason, of Gunston Hall. Right: Pohick Church, planned by Washington. Lower: Architect's proposed re-creation of Wakefield, Washington's birthplace.

CHAPTER II

THE COMING OF THE BARONS

IT happened that in the year 1646, the son of a brewer seized England and held the king prisoner. This man, Oliver Cromwell, threw an army against the City of Worcester. The leader of Cromwell's army was General Sir Thomas Fairfax; the defender of Worcester for the king was Colonel Sir Henry Washington.

Henry Washington, collateral ancestor of George Washington, saw this brief, blazing moment of glory: he refused to surrender the city until they brought him a written order from the captive king.

The fall of the monarchy in England was like a minor earthquake, its tremors flinging open doors and sending the fugitive occupants scurrying toward the sea and safety. Some went because they wished, others because they must. Those who remained, many of them, suffered for royalism — or loyalism. Among these was the Rev. Lawrence Washington, gentleman and one time fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford, who, three years before the death of Charles I, was ejected from his living at Purleigh, Essex. Those were days when it was possible for the English clergy to suffer much.

Lawrence, rector of Purleigh, had two sons, John and Lawrence. They were in the early twenties when their father, an upright, pious man, indulged himself in a righteous indiscretion. He arraigned the parliament and referred with cheerful tactlessness to "the usurpation of Oliver Cromwell." Parliament, humorless and grimly jealous of its conscience, retaliated promptly; it took away Washington's rich living in Purleigh, alleging the rector to be a frequenter of ale-houses, a drunkard, but most particularly and reprehensibly, "a malignant royalist." A contagion regarded in those days as scarcely curable and generally fatal.

The instance is typical of the times.

John and Lawrence, ambitious, healthy, possessing the superb arrogance of youth, sailed coolly away for the New World, taking substantial root in the newly-surprised soil of Virginia.

John and Lawrence had plenty of company. The "cavaliers" left their fine English homes more or less precipitately, when the head of Charles I fell on the block. But they took with them everything else; pride, family tradition, love of land, capacity for exacting service, spacious ideas of aristocratic privilege, an astounding adaptability to novel conditions, and a certain inherent nobility (in many instances) which was to become important in unforeseen ways.

Among the immigrants who landed on the shores of Virginia was Robert Carter. Later they called him "King" Carter; and king he was, so far as the Fairfax writ ran, for he solely administered it. Due to protests arising from the grant of the Northern Neck of Virginia to Lords Arlington and Culpeper, the colony of 6,000,000 acres passed, by purchase and arrangement, to Culpeper's daughter, wife of Baron Fairfax. Their son was Thomas, Lord Fairfax, the colorful figure who built Greenway Court in the Shenandoah Valley, not far from Winchester.

During his years as the Fairfax agent, "King" Carter founded for himself a notable family (largely represented in Virginia today), and a magnificent fortune. Eventually Lord Fairfax, preceding his own emigration, sent out his cousin, Col. William Fairfax, to manage the property.

Col. William's daughter fell in love and married Lawrence Washington, elder half-brother of George. George himself acknowledged Lord Fairfax as his friend and patron, for Lord Fairfax gave him his first surveying experience.

The time came when George Washington led victorious armies against the king, while the head of the house of Fairfax, weary with defending his feudal policy against the independent-minded Germans and Scotch-Irish who were coming to Virginia to escape just such a system, died, a few miles distant from the battlefields, a disappointed and indignant old loyalist of ninety-two. The news of the surrender of Cornwallis managed to reach him first. Worcester had reversed itself.

History employs and ignores these paradoxes. Mt. Vernon has become a shrine. Its famous neighbor, Belvoir, whence the Fairfax family ruled, has disappeared in flames. The hideous red brick of the entrance to Fort Humphreys, and ugly electrical transformers replace the graceful portals of the viceregal estate. Greenway Court has crumbled. Yet the baronial life of Virginia pivoted on Belvoir, and the gay,

graceful, chivalrous society of a brave, luxurious age danced and drank and played its way through the halls and gardens of the Fairfax house, while the voice from remoter Greenway Court was the voice of fortune.

It must have been a dramatic moment for most of them —this landing on the wilderness shores of the Virginia rivers. For that matter, it remains a dramatic moment today when, from the river by night, the wistful immigrant snuffs the promise of the new land, sees the billion lights and hears the screaming activity of the modern wilderness which is Manhattan. Conditions are reversed, but the miracle of opportunity is unchanged. Actually, those colonists were the first thin stream whose current, greatly swollen by time and promise, goes on and on; a living river of creative history which retains richly in its bed the fruitful sediment of all that has been swept along with it.

There came, then, the Carters, the Lees, the Fitzhughs, the Brents, the Washingtons, the Fairfaxes, the Calverts, the Masons, the Mercers, the Hills, the Digges, the Corbins, the Addisons, the Claggetts, the Keys, the Turbervilles, the Monroes, the Marshalls, and many, many more. Of these, some became the Lords of Maryland, others the Barons of the Virginia rivers. We follow the latter.

They took up huge grants, vaguely marked by rivers, mountains, or by a spacious reference to distant and uncharted country. For themselves, they chose estates, shrewdly separated by vast areas of usable land. These intervening areas they offered to settlers, or gave, in relatively small grants, to their serfs; thus, by enticing population, they enhanced the value of their own properties. The estates were of immense extent. A few scattered examples suffice to illustrate their princely character. The great Fitzhugh (William of Bedford) accumulated 50,000 acres on the Virginia side of the Potomac alone, in addition to other lands; one surplus item was a tract of 20,000 acres around Occoquon Creek, which is on the high road to Fredericksburg from Washington.

"King" Carter's descendant, Robert "the Councillor," ruled a domain of 63,000 acres from his seat at Nomini Hall, the great house where Philip Vickers Fithian, the diarist, was tutor. It was here that Fithian experienced one of his frequent amazements, this time over the vigorous character of the celebrated Turbervilles. In his diary Fithian notes that he became curious to know why the Turberville coachman

remained fast on the box of the coach even after the horses had been removed. It seemed, to Fithian, a strange and fantastic thing, to see this man erect on the box of the horseless vehicle, hour after hour. Prompted by curiosity to investigate, he found the coachman was chained there. "The fellow," remarks the outraged Fithian, "is inclined to run away, and this is the method which this tyrant makes use of to keep him when abroad."

There were two other Carter mansions: Corotamon in Northumberland and Sabine Hall on the Rappahannock. Other great places in the general neighborhood of Nomini Creek were Bushfield (a Washington house), Mt. Airy (the lovely home of the Tayloes, of whom Col. John Tayloe built the Octagon House still standing in Washington), Stratford (home of the Lees), Chantilly, Hickory Hill and the old Glebe House on the Machodoc River.

Major Moore Fantleroy (Fauntleroy) acquired from the Indians the lower part of Westmoreland county, at a point where it is fifteen miles wide. Richard Lee, the first, had 25,000 acres in the early part of the second half of the Seventeenth Century. George Mason, son of George, son of George the Immigrant, had a mere 15,000 acres on the Potomac, his seat being the finely-preserved Gunston Hall. He had other properties, however. Mt. Vernon was a mere 8,000 acres, but was much added to by George Washington, who died worth approximately $500,000 (some put the face value of his holdings as high as $1,000,000), much of it in real estate. He had lands in Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, New York, Pennsylvania, and the Ohio River Country.

By the time the Barons arrived much of the rough work had been done. The log cabin had given way to clapboard and then to rough stone; already houses were rising reminiscent of Europe. Prejudice at first insisted that, as at home in England, the houses must be without porches. Nature insisted otherwise, and the warm climate brought that characteristic fore-structure (and other adaptations) associated now with so-called colonial architecture.

It was a strange society. In its units it possessed the civilization released by the Elizabethan age. The problem was to express and realize it in a new land, whose estates were forests, and whose homes were utterly isolated one from another. The tastes were there; the means, in most cases, existed; also, as events proved, there was the will.

Land was, literally, "dirt cheap." Labor was cheaper than land. Both these facilities were under the hand of the Baron. He had land; he had indentured white servants and black slaves. But the Baron was not a robber-baron. He was, in the light of his time, a complete citizen. He insisted on laws. It is a most significant thing that with all the extravagance of opportunity and loose-knit organization of government, a legal course of conduct, formally stated, has been with the American people since the earliest beginnings of the nation.

By 1705 the fifth colonial revision of the code had become necessary; one of its provisions declared a slave to be real estate, thus attaching the slave, like the Russian serf, to the soil.

The cream of the honest Tory spirit, which soon was to begin a self-transformation, could be found in Sir William Berkeley, royal governor under both Charles I and Charles II. Berkeley, with solid conviction, famously declared:

"I thank God there are no free schools nor printing, and I hope we shall not have these hundred years; for learning has brought disobedience and heresy and sects into the world and printing has divulged them, and libels against the best government. God keep us from both!" Berkeley belonged to the Seventeenth Century, and he died before its close.

It was easy enough to build homes, for the wood was lavishly within arm's reach, and the red clay of Virginia makes fine bricks; it was easy enough to grow food, for labor was cheap and soil extensive; it was easy enough to lay out gardens and cut vistas. It was even relatively easy to raise the cotton for the clothing of the slaves and servants, and to make them shoes of the hides from the herds.

But the Baron needed many things. First, he needed a wife; and wives were scarce; mortality high. He needed furnishings for his house; and, before that, he needed architects, artisans, skilled men, doctors, teachers, preachers. All of these must come from over the water, and all must be paid for—even, in some early instances, the wife.

Few, if any, architects were available. But the skilled builders who did come must have been lay architects also, in inspiration, if not in diploma. For the houses went up. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., in his comprehensive plan to restore Williamsburg, recently purchased the house known as the Warren Estate. It is the oldest brick house of English construction in America, built in 1654 on land which Chief Powhatan gave

to Thomas Rolfe, son of his daughter Pocahontas and John Rolfe. It is easily to be seen; it stands across the James River from the deserted city of James Towne; on the property John Smith built a fort, whose ruins also remain.

Almost invariably the houses were four-square, with virtually nothing of what today is styled "English" or "village" architecture. The Baron owned the view. It was a generous age. Large estates, large gardens, large rooms, large hospitality; a spacious age, when men dealt with vague facts cheerfully, and phrased their bounds in miles, not feet.

The Baron owned the view. He chose, for his house, a favorable spot high above the river. Usually he cut a vista of the waterway so that the thither shore, violet and mist-laden, gave him a feeling of possessing the horizon. Behind him stretched his forests, crowding to the edges of his clearings or plantations. All were his: miles back and to either side. He could ride for hours and never leave his own estate; as for riding, it is a saying that the Baron would walk four miles to catch his horse for the purpose of riding one mile to his objective.

The Baron discovered his own coinage. He planted tobacco. Necessity found the means. The great riverside home became a port. The waterways were the natural highways. The port was free and independent. A dock was pushed out into the stream, so that the sailing ship could come with poetic materialism to the very door of the planter Baron, and wing again to its home port across the Atlantic.

Tobacco was his coinage, and the basic standard of a system of barter. Even the parson was paid in tobacco, although not very much of it, apparently. However, a good preacher rarely consented to serve a parish whose tobacco was of poor quality. Some parishes were long vacant "Upon Account of the Badness of the Tobacco." Occasionally there were other items of payment, in meat "on the hoof." The tobacco was often as good as the preacher. Berkeley is not the only one to leave such an acid comment as his remark that "the worst are sent us, and we have had few that we could boast of since Cromwell's tyranny drove divers men hither." It would be better, he added, "if they would pray oftener and preach less."

He may have had in mind the "sporting parson" who became a feature of the baronial days. The records are filled with them, and it was not only tobacco they consumed.

The "lady" of those days "came out" at fourteen. There

were not enough to go around. To the planter, on his vast estate, life without a wife was scarcely worth living. The Lady had to govern a number of slaves in the absence of her husband, and had to oversee the overseer. She was physician to the Negroes and convict servants. Her closet was filled with drugs. Her responsibilities were large and included the pretentious hospitality born of the desire for social intercourse among widely-separated families and the needs of travel over considerable distances when the friendly home took the place of the non-existent tavern.

The mansion became the center of a small village-community which formed the headquarters of the estate. Around and subordinate to the house were the quarters of the domestic help, kitchens, coach-house, laundry, dairy (usually over a spring), flower and kitchen gardens; above the out-buildings the slave-quarters. Sometimes the sons of the house had sleeping quarters over an outhouse. The main building as a general rule was not over large, considering the demands on its space.

So rich was the instinct for hospitality, and so relatively constricted the houses, that the surprising thing is where everyone was put. Records tell of four in a bed, of folk sleeping in all manner of queer places.

The invaluable Fithian writes somewhat proudly of the eight rooms at Nomini Hall, in the winter:

"Below is a dining Room where we usually sit; the second is a dining-Room for the Children; the third is Mr. Carter's study; & the fourth is a Ball-room thirty feet long. Above stairs, one Room is for Mr. & Mrs. Carter; the second is for the young Ladies; and the other two for occasional Company." The boys slept in a room over the schoolhouse.

Such an experienced commentator as Paul Wilstach, in his "Potomac Landings," muses on the problem of putting all the Carter girls in one upstairs chamber, even though each room in the house was approximately thirty by twenty-two feet.

The striking feature of the baronial age is found in just that, and the philosophy of it as well. It was a time of makeshifts.

There were the great traditions, the spreading acres, the growing tobacco wealth, the slaves and servants, everything a king might possess; side by side with all this feudal possession was crudity and makeshift, moral and material. The Baron reigned under the eye of his peers, with scant regard for the distant law-makers of Williamsburg. The Baron's

Lady was a queen, but she actively superintended the vast domestic arrangements inseparable from the complicated plantation system. The Baron was a king, but he needed to oversee his "ministers," and note carefully the passing of his hogsheads of tobacco down the rolling-road.

It was a time of great independence already founded on the necessity of labor, of organization, of direction. There was little that was worthless among the Barons, even though here and there a wild spirit flamed out, burning up life and fortune. The lazy Baron was robbed by his slaves, cheated by his agents, and therefore lacked the wherewithal for the thing he prized most, the exercise of the uncounted hospitality which was the hall-mark of his position.

The age of the Barons ripened . . . and part of the harvest was a nation.

CHAPTER III

THE RIPENING AGE

WHEN a twenty-two year old youth ascended the throne of England, to be remembered vexatiously in history as George III, Walpole remarked, with enthusiasm, of the new monarch:

"He seems all good nature and wishing to satisfy everybody."

Just one year before that doubtful prophecy, George Washington, six years older than the hopeful prince, married Martha Dandridge Custis.

The time marks, as well as can be, the fruition of the age of the Barons, and the beginning of the great transformation.

Society, by this time, had defined itself. The system was complete. The houses of the Barons dotted the map; back so far as the Shenandoah, the plantation looked increasingly toward the west. Except for the frontier troubles with the tribes it was an age of peace. The soldiers of France moved ghostily toward the pages of bloody history. But for the Barons it was, nonetheless, the heyday of a golden age.

The plantation had taken on a common form. Outlying farms hung on the eyelash, so to speak, of the tree-fringed estate. The plantation had become self-sustaining; its patriarch ruled supreme. The blacksmith, the cobbler, the baker, the carpenter, the distiller, the sewing women, and all the other essential aides of the barony, lived within the shadow of the central house, as every visitor to Mt. Vernon has seen.

The slave was property, real estate. Washington's books show that he paid the local preacher, Mr. Green, two pounds cash for taking up a runaway Negro. Marriage among the slaves was infrequent or casual. Babies came and were added to the roster of property. Available records show a relative standard of fair treatment. A physician was on a yearly basis at Mt. Vernon, as at many other places. Usually there was a midwife among the "property."

The midwife on Mt. Vernon estate was Susanne, wife of Thomas Bishop, an old body-servant bequeathed to Washington by General Braddock on the latter's deathbed at Great

Meadows. Bishop's annual salary worked up from ten to twenty-five pounds; eventually good living and too ready access to the cups killed him in what would now be called delirium tremens. His wife received ten shillings for each attendance.

In 1771 Washington records such services performed by Mrs. Bishop to "Lame Alce, Negro Nell, Betty at ye Ferry, and House Alce" always at the same rate. The entries run back and forth through the years; even in momentous 1776 the careful man found time to enter an item of ten shillings for Bishop, for such a service.

The bondwoman rarely had any last name, and was distinguished chiefly by occupation or physical characteristic. "Lame Alce" is pathetically eloquent of her physical deformity. Betty apparently worked down at the farm by the river. "House Alce" or Alice was a slave about the mansion premises, a preferred occupation.

The houses rarely were large. Even Mt. Vernon was not very commodious until George Washington, who declared it had become "a well-resorted tavern," for hospitality, enlarged it. For a score of years, says Washington himself, never a day passed at Mt. Vernon without company.

But the outhouses were numerous, and a proud Baron, here or elsewhere, could survey literally a world that was his own, even to the private cemetery and tombstones which stressed the truth that the Baron and his family, in life and in death, needed nothing beyond the borders of the estate.

Mortality, as mentioned, was high. Girls married in their early teens, and were treated with profound respect and concern. Widows set a just value on themselves. Husbands married, re-married, and married again. Widows the same. The bogy was lonesomeness. Divorce was virtually unknown; one amazing instance of a separation that occurs in the early records creates quite a to-do. The man was a bad lot, guilty of the incredible and unforgivable sin of brutality to his wife. His tendencies were patently homicidal and the colony's shocked comment dismissed him, with amazement, as mad.

The families on the hill-tops intervisited, inter-married, split up, and reunited their vast holdings, while below them a "gentry" class of freed men and immigrants climbed steadily upwards, occasionally linking themselves with the Barons by marriage.

Far down the scale was the slave and the tragic poor white who had it not in him to climb. Society was primitive, harsh, but wide-handed; it accepted the realities and dealt

with them without too much imagination, until the vast baronial scheme of commerce, tobacco, agriculture, continental exchange—in fact the unity of the plantation—was threatened; and threatened by interference no Baron would have tolerated from his peer next door, even less, then, from those three thousand miles away.

Of all the chaotic needs of the Barons, that of education for the children was the chief. Many were sent back to schools in England, George Washington barely escaping. Fithian, already mentioned, was typical of the imported tutors, many of them high-minded and endeavoring men, who learned perhaps as much as they taught. Religious service was less a problem, for if good preachers—or even good ministers—were scarce, churches could be and were built.

The parish church held more significance than the preachers, of whom, however, Parson Mason L. Weems is not a fair example. Weems was a peddler of books and a "hedge-priest." He embalmed himself in his nation's memory by his lively and fantastic biography of George Washington. Of Weems, writes Mary G. Powell, with womanly gentleness, that he "was wont to embellish his histories with spirited anecdotes of which he seems to have been the sole custodian."

Whoever the minister, the Sunday service was a social event. The Barons, family, guests, retainers, came from miles around, often in great pomp. Of "King" Carter it was said that none dared enter the church until after his arrival. Outside the church, and even inside, there was a magnificent free-tongued exchange of gossip, and an equally fascinating display of the latest finery received from across the water.

Sometimes it was necessary for an usher or attendant to summon the gay throng, thus liberated from isolation, inside for the discourse. One notes the simplicity of this, the air of picnic. These people lived far separated, and the weekly service was as good an excuse as any, and better than most, for an inevitable release from a locked-up week.

One frequent member of this group outside the church was the sheriff, or other suitable and equally incongruous officer of the law. Service of writs and similar papers was no easy job with roads that were mud ruts, and Barons so hard to get at in the depths and vast expanses of their estates, and with the population so scattered. The sheriff spared himself much distressing effort if he saved up his papers until Sunday. He would find almost everyone who interested him, at church. In time, public annoyance over this labor-saving

brought the law prohibiting the service of legal papers on Sunday. Work it was.

Note, in passing, not a sheriff, but John Perry, postman. One of the earliest colonial mail-carriers, he first rode, in 1687, an irregular post in New England. By 1695, he apparently had the regular but troublesome route between Philadelphia and the Potomac. The service, by horseback, included painfully circuitous trail-breaking. Many of those early postal routes died of their difficulties; sometimes it was, as in the case of Perry, the postman who died of his.

Pohick Church, a little south of Mt. Vernon on the road to Fredericksburg, saw many of these gay Sunday morning meetings of church-goers, and today still attracts its congregation from so far away as Washington. It is equally distant from Mt. Vernon, then the home of George Washington, and the home, Gunston Hall, of his friend George Mason, author of the Virginia Bill of Rights. Washington designed the church, and Mason completed the building of it.

There was a loud dispute over the location of this church until Washington, in his logical manner, proved mathematically that this site was the exact center of the church's congregation. It was long his parish church, even though he attended Christ Church, Alexandria, at one time. He had two front pews at Pohick, one for the use, at need, of his guests. He always drove up in one of the smartest of coaches.

Outriders frequently gave a uniformed touch of pomp and circumstance to important parishioners; a certain stately ceremony prefaced the gay commingling of these companies of familiar, distant friends. After-church is still a grand visiting time in Virginia, and the silver loving-cup has not wholly vanished. In the baronial days Sunday was the show-day for society, a holiday not, however, lacking an enveloping aroma of gravity.

For all of these of the baronial aristocracy, London and the continent of Europe formed their shopping market. Mail-order, of course. The ship that carried away the tobacco crop brought back in exchange the new coach, the gilded coats, the fringed dresses, the great mirrors, the mantel ornaments, the master bedstead, the buckles and the shoes, everything Europe could supply that a gentleman with a fair crop of marketable tobacco might fancy he needed. Two things illumine these material possessions, the invoices that went to London agents (read the prodigious one drawn up by George Washington in

anticipation of his wedding), and the wills that disposed of the more lasting of these treasures. Great mirrors were a particular satisfaction as an index to position; the possessor of several was, in his day, beyond the dream of avarice. A fine mattress became a family heirloom. Pewter was, for long, a matter of family pride, until silver became first a fad of the very wealthy and then a necessity for those who wished to be considered so.

Little deference had these powerful Barons, lords of lands and lives, for the distant governing officials at the struggling capital. The life fostered a spirit of independence. The Baron's word was law. Time mellowed the arrogance into sociability and softened harsh outlines of a pure feudalism. The proud family traditions and coats of arms became the insignia of wide-handed hospitality. The bleak facts of the frontier were graciously hidden in invoices of millinery and jewelry, of ribbons, silks, necklaces. The Barons and their ladies were more particular in their attire than London. The mired roads and trackless hills never soiled nor even touched their pride.

Families had a custom of spending the day with one another, for, however great the party, there was always an abundance of slaves to perform the necessary tasks. One day the Turbervilles of Hickory Hill had fourteen more or less unexpected guests at table and "an elegant dinner" it was, remarks Fithian, who accompanied the Carter family there. Fithian thought it no better, however. than the every day repast at his employer's palace.

Wilstach discovered in Fithian details of a more characteristic and bewildering "visit." Parson Smith, who officiated at Nomini Church and at Yeocomico, casually invited the tutor to call "some day this week." Fithian, in his diary for the Monday of "this week," tells the story: "At Breakfast Mrs. Carter gave me an Invitation to wait on her to Parson Smith's. Mr. Carter offered me his riding Horse, a beautiful gray, young, lively colt; We set out about Ten, Mrs. Carter, Miss Prissey, Miss Fanny & Miss Betsy, in the Chariot; Bob and I were on Horseback; Mrs. Carter had three waiting Men; a Coachman, Driver & Postilion. We found the way muddy; got there a little after twelve; Mr. Smith was out; I was introduced by Mrs. Carter to Mrs. Smith, and a young Lady her Sister who lives with them; at Dinner I was at Mr. Smith's request to 'say Grace' as they call it; which is always expressed

by the people in the following words, 'God bless us in what we are to receive'—and after Dinner, 'God made us thankful for his mercies.'—As we were sitting down to table Bob Carter rode up; when we had dined, the Ladies retired, leaving us a Bottle of Wine, & a Bowl of Toddy for companions. . . . We returned in the Evening."

So the parson had an unexpected "call" from six guests with a retinue of three servants. The trip from Nomini Hall to the Glebe was approximately five miles; next door in those days, without automobiles.

That was conventional. All the members of a household would travel anywhere from five to fifteen miles to make an ordinary visit to a neighbor. The older folk would play whist for moderate stakes; the young people got up games, danced, rode, made love; and all dined magnificently in the early afternoon, so that the guests could depart after an early tea.

Tied to the private dock of the estate would be various craft, notably the six-oared gig of the Baron. In this he sailed forth in state, slaves at the oars, to visit his neighbors, to drift up and down the river scrutinizing the growing fisheries (George Washington had ten miles of them), and measuring with his eye the horizon of his possessions, to gather in a friend for an hour of cards and a bottle, or a little matter of a deal in square miles of real estate.

Walpole's prodigy on the English throne could not be expected to comprehend this.

Christenings and weddings were naturally the occasion of great feasts. There is no room for their details. But they lasted days and nights, and drained the country for a hundred miles around to make the company complete for the celebration. Imagine the distant roads of spattering mud ploughed up by coach and saddle-horse, the focusing of all these equipages on a single estate; the adults, the children, the friends, the tutors, the servants, the ministers, even the dogs; and there is a picture of neighborly interest and social celebration which, taking all the factors into consideration, has no parallel. George of England, already having spells of mumbling, knew nothing of this; nor of the indomitable spirit behind it.

There were famous crabbing parties on the lower and deeper reaches of the Potomac. Early in the morning the host and guests would sail out on a vessel large enough for a dance. Each lady was provided with a fishing-line made of hickory-bark, at the end of which was a bit of fat meat around which the green crabs gathered; beside each lady was a beau,

who lowered his handnet. The crabs, thus victimized by the sirens and their delusive promise of fat meat, were emptied fatally into a large boiling pot where they swam until red.

Two men, Washington and Mason, amuse themselves riding slowly along the common "frontier" to define the boundary. Time was when law compelled a man to notch the trees at regular intervals. Not so between friends. One sends the other a quarter of venison; a present of imported Canary wine travels back by way of return courtesy.

There is a fox-hunt in the morning, and two days hence and next week again. Ducks and wild turkey are to be hunted. The duck-shooter is hid in his boat which drifts among the ducks, his gun through a port-hole. The turkey-hunter carries a whistle made from a turkey-bone. The dogs disturb the turkeys and the hunter deceivingly lures them to a fatal rendezvous.

A gay scene on hunt day. The ladies of the baronies were not huntresses; but each meet saw them admiringly gathered, to frame in color the departure of the Barons. Their reward came later, for the end of a hunt-day was a dance.

Everything possible was holiday. Just as hampers were carried to church so that between morning and afternoon services a feast could be laid in a grove, so on court days, expeditions were organized, the ladies listened to famous lawyers, and later danced with them at a ball. The shades still linger in a hundred old houses, and crumbling balconies are heavy with the memories of sweet evenings of that radiant age.

King George never understood this. It was, in fact, in very fact, a New World.

Important race meetings were held at Williamsburg and Fredericksburg and across the Potomac in Maryland. Washington, in common with all the world of the new land, attended them. Great fairs spaced out the year, with masquerades and river festivals. At such festivals many marriages were arranged, a famous tradition.

Back on the plantation, careful planning, hard work, close supervision, medicines, tobacco, drying-rooms, shipping, supplies, exchange . . . A life of swift contrast, welding two extremes together into a single hardy element which soon would strike fire from history.

No, neither George nor anyone else three thousand miles across the sea could perceive this nor, seeing, comprehend it. We only now are beginning to.

CHAPTER IV

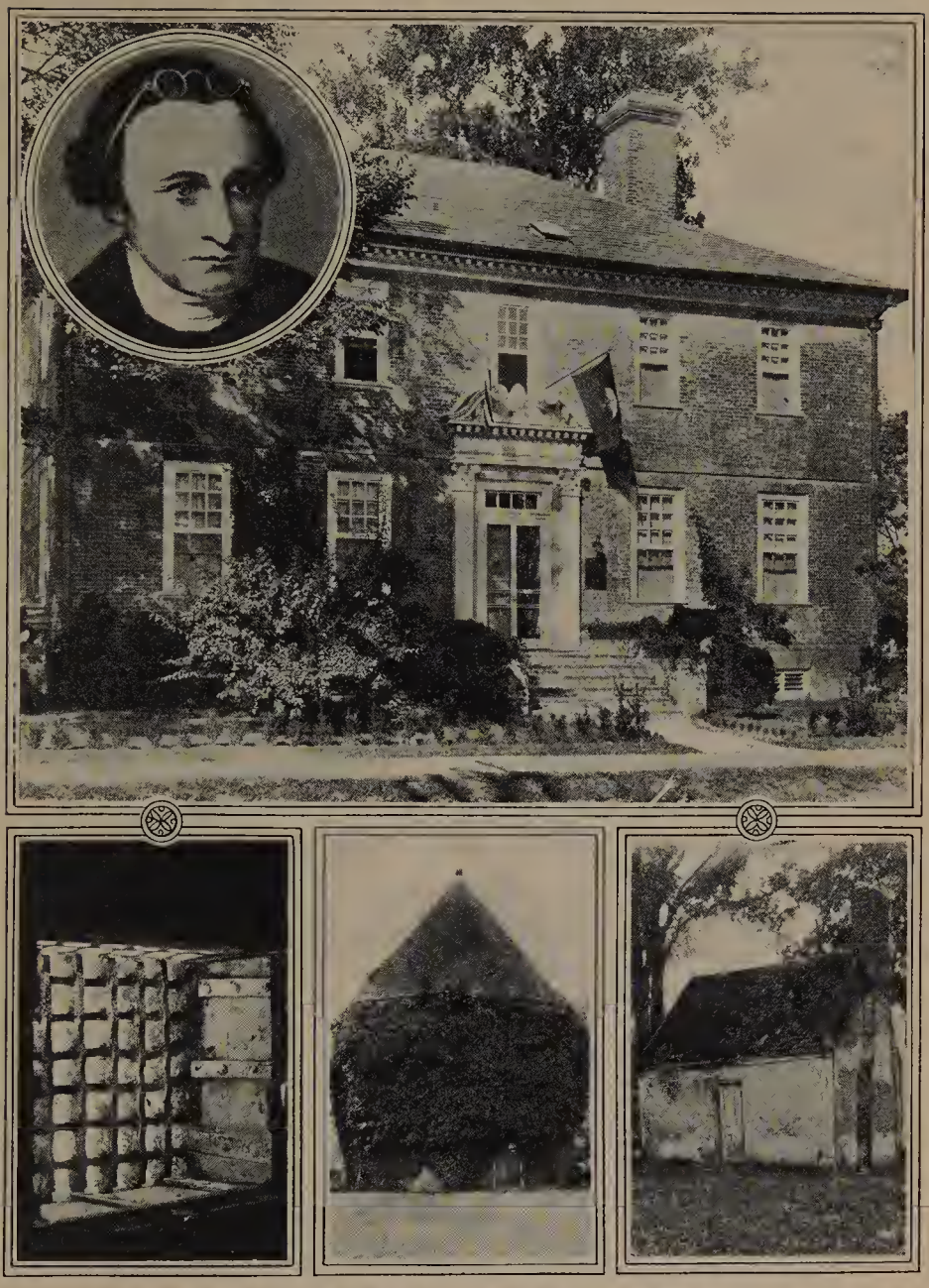
THE GAY CAPITAL

A RURAL legislator made his miry way to the Virginia capital, in a rainy April. The numerous streams were swollen; a ferry carried him to Maryland across the Potomac to avoid the swamps and submerged roads of the Virginia side; then over the Potomac again into Virginia, and so to Williamsburg. It was a troublesome journey and he drew what consolation he could from the fact that he certainly would charge the colony for ten days' travel pay, including his ferry fees. He made a point of this.

The legislator was George Washington, a youngish man, but well considered. The capital was the wordly paradise of his day. For him it had a multitude of reflections. The Raleigh Tavern had known him long. The Governor's formal dances welcomed him. The Jockey Club recognized him. The theatre counted him among its most constant patrons. And here (waiving arguments about possibilities elsewhere) he undoubtedly met Martha Dandridge Custis and pursued his courtship.

Williamsburg inherited from the unlucky Jamestown and became the materialistic epitome of the baronial days. It was the gay capital, since it summed up virtually all there was of metropolitan abandon and common pleasure. Its inhabitants numbered, perhaps, a thousand.

The one hundred and seven colonists who landed at the mouth of the James River in 1607 were seeking, individually, not forests to clear, lands to till, settlements to create for perpetuity, cities to rear; they were seeking gold; for England, sharp-eared, had the word that Virginia was a mine to be scraped with the fingers. However, leadershp, always as necessary as it is cumbersome to the lawless, willed some manner of order. A site thirty-two miles from the mouth of the river was chosen. Action of the current has made the spot an island. It is still as beautiful in the spring as the day when the adventurers first listened with morose scepticism to the prayers of the priest who accompanied them. Its misadventures are history; its burnings, dilapidation, desertions, repopulations. The arrival in Jamestown of three hundred and fifty men in 1619 made of it a sizeable community. In 1619 it was the momentous background for the first legislative assembly held in North America.



Upper: The Wythe House, Williamsburg, Washington's headquarters during the campaign against Cornwallis. Inset: Patrick Henry. Lower left: Window of old jail, Williamsburg. Center: "The Powder Horn." Right: Martha Custis's kitchen, Williamsburg.

During the rebellion of Nathaniel Bacon in 1676 Jamestown was burned. In 1698 the State House perished in flames, and the glory of the community departed, never to return. Williamsburg, farther up the river and three miles back of it, became the capital.

Yet Jamestown contains the kernel of the great American epic. Here the Rev. Richard Bucke ("Parson Bucke") performed the first christening, the first marriage, welcomed Lord Delaware, who arrived when the colonists were sailing away in flight from starvation, and offered a prayer for the first legislative assembly (all the Burgesses having taken their places "in the Quire") that it would "please God to guide and Sanctifye all our proceedings to His owne glory and to the good of the Plantation."

Jamestown, in its brief heyday, was a city of "ordinaries" —hotels, travelers' rests, taverns—the records indicating that the inhabitants realized the opportunities of the port, in true convention spirit, by charging "extraordinary rates." However, charges eventually were fixed by law: a night's lodging with clean sheets was sixpence; a dinner with good small beer, a shilling and three pence; a pint of rum made into punch with white sugar, one shilling and sixpence; pasturage or stablage for a horse for twenty-four hours, sixpence; and corn or oats, the same price, per gallon.

Stores came into existence on the echo of need, and one of the earliest American merchants of record is Thomas Warnett, of Jamestown. This early Wanamaker died, leaving a will dated 1629, in which his merchandise and personal belongings seem strangely mixed. He bequeaths: "butter, salt, candles, pepper, ginger, meal, ink, writing paper, silk stockings, white starch, blue starch, pins, knives, a green scarf edged with gold lace, his best sword with gilt belt, his second best sword, his felt hat, sheets, towels, napkins, tablecloths, a gilded looking glass, a black beaver hat, a doublet of black camlet, a pair of black hose, vinegar, thread of several colors, silk and threaded buttons, a pewter candlestick, oil, a black felt hat, a suit of gray kersie, a weeding hoe, a howing hoe, Irish stockings, bars of lead, gunpowder, a Polish cap furred, a pair of red slippers," for all of which see Water's Gleanings, and for similar inventories Mary Newton Stanard's "Colonial Virginia."

Jamestown saw the first chair ever brought to America, the green velvet one used by Lord Delaware in the church. But chairs were only then being introduced into England.

To Jamestown, also, was brought Pocahontas, to dazzle the mind and heart of James Rolfe. The love story of the Indian maid (sold by a faithless uncle to Captain Argall at the price of a copper kettle) and the earliest gentleman tobacco planter of the colony and a member of his Majesty's Council to boot, is one of the most charming in all history. Desperately Rolfe wrote to the governor, Sir Thomas Dale, begging approval of the union: "My heart and best thoughts are and have byn a long tyme soe intangled and enthralled in soe intricate a laborinth that I was ever awearied to unwynde myself thereout."

It was at Jamestown that the colonists learned what the Indians knew about the use of corn. Farms were planted, orchards laid out, and on the heights above the turbulent waters houses reared themselves—Sabine Hall, Brandon, Shirley, Stratford, Westover.

Westover is the famous house of the Byrd family. Capt. William Byrd obtained during one year from his island at the falls of the James River 1,200 gallons of rum, 5,000 pounds of muscovado sugar, 3 tons of molasses, 200 pounds of ginger, 1 cask of lime juice. He left nothing unattended to. He sent specimens of ore to England for examination, treated lead ores himself, and owned two grist mills. He began Westover in 1655 and there William Byrd, the author and lawyer, was born, continuing later the development of what became one of the finest of libraries. Westover's chimney piece was imported from Italy; the gates of hammered iron came from England.

The celebrated son was sent to England for education. The "young master" later listed among his effects: Coaches and six, costly wines, silk stockings, and hair powder. He owned possibly 100,000 acres and an army of slaves. The Westover library, finest in colonial America, contained 3,625 volumes. This Byrd filled many high public offices and, among other things, planned the town of Richmond.

His son married Elizabeth Carter, of Shirley, uniting two of the "first families." Also he played ducks and drakes with the Byrd estate at the gaming tables. Robert Carter, at ten years, had one suit of fine brown holland, lace hat, white gloves, red worsted stockings. Betty, who married young Byrd, possessed at fourteen a quilt cap, blue and white lute string coat and silk heeled shoes laced with long loops. She came into possession, further, of a cap, ruffles, fan, necklace, girdle, buckle, hoop coat, mantua and coat of slight lutestring.

Her father's home was distinguished because one parlor had crimson wallpaper; George Washington was the first to import this novelty. The Carter home had marble hearth-slabs, wrought brass sconces, Wilton rugs, silver plate.

Those homes were always open to the well-recommended passerby, and occasionally the guests were wholly unknown, their names unremembered. Of Brandon, built by Capt. John Martin, and later the historic seat of the Harrisons, it is said that a gentleman who stopped casually in passing, with his wife, carriages and servants, remained more than six months! Visitors could fish, hunt, lounge or read. When Jamestown faded into neglected dust, and Williamsburg became the seat of fashion and pleasure as well as of government, the great houses were not concerned. They were far removed, spiritually, from the necessity of daily metropolitan communication. The one place was relatively as near as the other.

Virtually every gentleman of the day sought or received some sort of public service. The trips to Williamsburg during the legislative sessions were the social milestones of the colony.

The Raleigh Tavern, named for Sir Walter and with good reason, was the unofficial center of casual conviviality, just as the Governor's Palace was the throne-room of social convention. The palace was built and furnished in 1710, the governor ordering that the great room, in the second story, be hung with gilt leather, with sixteen chairs to match, tables, sconces, and two large mirrors with the arms of the Colony on them. Another order for the Palace, equally as surprising for that day, included "three dozen strong fashionable chairs," tables, large mirrors, chimney glasses and "one marble buffette or sideboard with a cistern and fountain."

The balls saw all the gallantry of a day rich in it. Not only did Washington find Martha Custis, but that ladies' man, Thomas Jefferson, sighed and sighed in vain for Rebecca Burwell, a beautiful daughter of "Carter's Creek." His letters to his friend, John Page, testify to the devastation of mind he underwent. But eventually he, too, married a widow.

Williamsburg sums up almost all Virginia history of the colonial period. Jefferson not only loved there, but played the fiddle and shook a leg in the Apollo Room of the Raleigh Tavern. Lee's ancestors were there. A lovely house still stands on Palace Green, where George Wythe taught law to such promising young men as Jefferson, Monroe, Edmund Randolph, Henry Clay and John Marshall. There were Carys, Blairs,

Pages. Ghosts fill the streets and people the famous acres of William and Mary College, second in age in this land, mother of three Presidents. The steps of John Blair's house are all that is left of the first American theatre. It is a veritable source of American origins, this neighborhood.

The theatre in Williamsburg had for its first leading artists, a versatile couple, Charles and Mary Stagg. Eventually the Staggs set up a dancing school, dancing and the Staggs alike being very popular. The Staggs were a little dismayed to run into stiff competition from Madame la Baronne de Graffenreidt, whose husband had brought a colony of Swiss to North Carolina. The rivalry was good for the customers, for each establishment sought to outdo the other in the promotion of suitable entertainments. To the gaiety of the dance, lotteries were added, which reached their climax when Mrs. Stagg advertised "several grotesque dances never yet performed in Virginia" with valuable goods to be raffled for, including "a likely young Negro fellow." Madame la Baronne could make only one answer to this. She announced nothing less than a ball at which there would be raffled "a likely young Virginia Negro woman fit for house business, and her child."

Mrs. Stagg, busy woman, had another source of income. The Virginia Gazette in 1738 carried her advertisement of "mackaroons, Savoy biscuits and Barbadoes sweetmeats," but especially of "Hartshorn and Calvesfoot jellies fresh every Tuesday." Of which a passing traveler made record: "I did eat of Mrs. Stagg's too much, yet not enough." Which is a sound testimonial.

The pages of the old Virginia Gazette, edited and published by that grasping monopolist, William Parks, are filled with these and similar details; the panorama of life in the capital is to be found, particularly in the advertising pages. There is a "B. Buckrout, cabinet-maker from London" who positively guarantees to produce "the mathematical gouty-chair," and if that means what it appears to mean, it is only fair to admit that gout was a gentlemanly affliction common to the highest in the land.

The Raleigh Tavern saw the wagers laid, for it was a gambling age. With exceptions, such as William Byrd, the Third, who went it pretty heavy, the gambling was a social concern which, in the course of a year, ran everybody pretty well even. George Washington's books show his gains and losses at cards, and they balance well enough. The typical

account, frequently quoted of late, and reproduced in facsimile by Rupert Hughes, the pages being from Ledger B, 1772-1774, is sufficiently enlightening. It is headed "Cards and Other Play," and opens on the debit side with the ominous entry for Feb. 28, 1772: "To Cash lost at Fredericksburgh £2-3-6." However on the "Contra" side of the ledger this exact man is able to enter on Jan. 1, 1775: "By Bal. against Play from Jan. 1772 to this date £6-3-3." The total balance involved in this period was £78-5-9. Washington himself called his gambling like his dancing, of which he was very fond, an "agreeable and innocent amusement."

It was much the same with the drinking. Washington notoriously had a hard head; there is nowhere any record of his being visibly affected by potations. Yet there is ample testimony that he, no more and no less probably, and all the others of his time, maintained good cellars, and were presumably convivial. It was a superstition among the Virginian colonists, at least, that a mint julep in the morning warded off malaria, and few, in fact, succumbed to that.

Mary Newton Stanard goes further. Remarking that the Englishman or the Scotchman brought with him across the sea his convivial habits and passed them on to his children, she adds: "Even Puritan and Quaker restraint did not extend to the cup, for the court records exhibit no more proof of drunkenness in one colony than another." She comments on the malaria preventive and, pursuing this remedial line of thought, continues: "A toddy, or a glass of wine, punch, or beer, at almost any time of the day or night," was believed to be "good for the body as well as cheering to the spirit and indispensable to the practice of hospitality."

However, the Colony took precautions against drinking becoming an evil. Laws were passed as early as 1645 regulating the quantity imported; and debts for hard liquor were made irrecoverable because certain intemperate persons had become a general scandal "to the Colony and to temperate and continent men." From the records it appears that the juries of that day dealt faithfully with offenders against intemperance, even indicting magistrates if necessary.

There was also a good deal of cock-fighting, largely patronized by the Negroes. Fithian writes on an Easter Monday that "the Negroes are all disbanded 'till Wednesday morning and are at Cock fights through the country."

There was horseracing for the gentry and fairs for every-

one. At first it was a market, but later it became a grand inpouring of the countryside for varied diversions. The streets of Williamsburg were then at their busiest, far more crowded even than during the legislative session. Everyone of quality had his coach, following the example of Sir William Berkeley, who owned the first coach in Virginia. A curious bit of testimony gives Berkeley this distinction. Commissioners were sent from England in 1677 to suppress Bacon's Rebellion. They complained, says the record, that when Berkeley sent them in his coach to the wharf he insulted them by having the "common hangman" as a postilion. Berkeley declared himself as innocent "as the blessed angels themselves," but he is easily convicted of having a coach.

That was unusual in the Seventeenth Century when road conditions made horseback and water the best means of transport. But by the time of Washington, Jefferson, Monroe and all the figures, great and gay, of the Fruition period, the coach was a matter of great cost and pride.

The record of George Washington's coach-order to Robert Cary & Co. of London has been printed in many places, among others in Ford's "Writings." Therein Washington laments that his old chariot has run its course, and orders another to be brought out by Capt. Johnston, "or some other ship."

"As these are kind of articles," he writes, "that last with care against number of years, I would willingly have the chariot you may now send me in the newest taste, handsome, genteel and light; yet not slight, and consequently unserviceable; to be made of the best seasoned wood and by a celebrated workman. The last importation which I have seen, besides the customary steel springs, have others that play in a brass barrel and contribute at one and the same time to the ease and ornament of the carriage. One of this kind, therefore, would be my choice; and green being a color little apt, as I apprehend, to fade, and grateful to the eye, I would give it the preference, unless any other color more in vogue and equally lasting is entitled to precedency.

"In that case I would be governed by fashion. A light gilding on the moulding (that is, round the panels) and any other ornaments, that may not have a heavy and tawdry look (together with my arms agreeable to the impression here sent) might be added, by way of decoration. A lining of a handsome, lively colored leather of good quality I should also prefer, such

as green, blue, or &c., as may best suit the color of the outside." This order was dated in June, 1768.

In spite of these meticulous specifications, Washington complained with bitterness two years later that he had been cheated for his £133— "the wood so exceedingly green that the panels slipped out of the mouldings before it was two months in use—Split from one end to the other."

There are no orders more revealing of the age than those of Washington, a rich, generous, but most careful man when it came to spending his pennies. The specifications are presented as characteristic of the splendor of the equipages, and no less, of the pride the Barons took in their appearance before the public and their neighbors.

It is still possible, on the mellow streets of Williamsburg, to recapture something of this. It is a city with the aroma of the past mysteriously preserved. Its countryside is vivid with memories radiating from the great houses which still stand, a little hurt, but proud and aloof yet, with doors that magically swing open to the guest. There is at Williamsburg, Basset Hall, where President John Tyler lived; the George Wythe House, which was Washington's headquarters when he opposed Cornwallis at Yorktown sixteen miles away; the two-century-old Randolph House, and, of more recent history, the Vest House, where McClellan made his headquarters in the Civil War. Over at Yorktown is the historic Moore House, where Lord Cornwallis signed articles of surrender, drafted by Washington. This house, for one hundred and fifty years privately owned, has been purchased, with the field on which the surrender occurred, by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., as part of an elaborate plan for the restoration of historic Williamsburg and neighborhood.

Finally, before leaving the old Colonial capital, there is a solid, small, square, white-tiled building with a thin sloping roof, which was Martha Dandridge Custis's kitchen, the sole remnant of her former home there. It stands isolated beneath giant trees, and summons no pictures of gay coaches, or race tracks, or tavern gaieties. It is so obviously the kernel of a home. All the rest was the surface-life of a hard-driven people. The home was at once the seat of empire and the haven of refuge, the pride and the boast, and the warm corner of earth. They stand, some of them, as monuments, with walls that could speak . . .

CHAPTER V

THE CRADLE OF A NEW ERA

IT is, to any casual eye, a swamp. At closer inspection, it is still a swamp.

It is a neglected, tousled, untidy and inaccessible swamp. Nevertheless on this roofless spot George Washington was born. It is Wakefield, to you; to John Washington, irritable, repressed, and fresh out from England, it was Bridge's Creek. There he set his foot and planted his home. It was not so much of a place; it did not compare at all with the great houses of his peers. Yet John Washington was soon a man of substance, thriftily bargaining for land in return for a venture in immigrants—he brought in a hundred and received as his reward a vast acreage on the Potomac, part of which is known today as Mt. Vernon. A quiet, hard-bitten emigrant of the Cromwellian era—this man who built the first Wakefield house.

Augustine, grandson of John, father of George, was an ironmaster. He was educated at Appleby School in England; was brought back by the widow of his father, and his stepfather George Gale. He inherited farming interests; took up the iron business, developing three plants, one of which in 1750 furnished the English market with 410 tons of pig iron —pretty good for a small Colonial industry—and owned his own vessel for transporting his ores and bringing back cargoes of merchandise, immigrants, indentured servants.

Mary Ball, his second wife, is chronicled as "The Rose of Epping Forest," for "Epping Forest" was the name of her father's estate in Lancaster County. Of the young Mary Ball authentic details are exasperatingly few. Later records show her a strong-minded and outspoken woman, of whose brisk tongue most persons, including her son, stood in respect.

"George," she remarked with devastating maternal frankness one day in that marvelous old garden, still to be seen in Fredericksburg, "I think George some day will come to be hanged!"

She was an irreconcilable Tory, and an honest one. For her son was then already on his wild courses, affronting King

Upper: Washington's boyhood home, Ferry Farm, viewed from Fredericksburg. Center: Washington's mother and her last home. Lower left: Rising Sun Tavern, resort of the Barons. Lower right: Only remaining Ferry Farm building that Washington knew.

George, inciting colonists to take up arms, and what not of deviltry and rebellion.

George was the first-born of Mary Ball, with four ahead of him by his father's first marriage to Jane Butler. The house in which he was born was the second Wakefield. This, too, was not in a category with Stratford and the mansions. Charles Moore, a qualified student of Washington's life, thinks the original house stood near Bridge's Creek, on the tree-covered bluff overhanging the Potomac. The more commodious later house he places near Pope's Creek, and not where the present monument stands. He says: "Like most colonial houses, it had four rooms and a hall on the first floor, with chambers above."

Only the ragged foundations remain. There is talk of reconstructing it for the Washington bicentennial; a pious futility for there is nothing at all for guide except the inventory of the furnishings. All that can be built is a house typical of the period, which that inventory might be supposed conveniently to furnish. But a task to delight the heart of any antiquarian.

George was scarcely two years old when he was taken to the house of his half-brother, Lawrence, at Mt. Vernon. In six years more he was back on the Ferry Farm, across the Rappahannock from Fredericksburg; and there and thereabouts he spent the imaginative years of boyhood. It was, in fact, his own farm; bequeathed to him, out of a handsome estate, by his father, Augustine, together with some other real estate and ten Negro slaves.

Mary, mother of Washington, and the children lived on Ferry Farm, easily to be seen on the slopes across from the town. Local legend says she collected the ferry tolls and sent the boys across to Fredericksburg to peddle vegetables; but that sounds too good to be true. However, it was an interesting farm, and still is; if you cross the river and take a winding dirt road you can come on it today. Back of the trim white frame building on which the eye at Fredericksburg fastens is a tiny lean-to; all that remains of the buildings known by George Washington; in its early days, an office. From the hill-crest, where stood the house, a likely farm stretches down the slope to the Rappahannock, the sort of farm that indicates hard work; across the river, the spires of the town and the famous "Sentry Box," a spacious dwelling

from whose windows the river approaches could be suspiciously scanned in time of war.

All in all, the family was prosperous. But prosperity did not mean, in those days, extravagance. The Washingtons, prior to George, were not of the Barons. They carefully got together an estate which, even when divided among so large a family, was considerable.

Fredericksburg has much, but nothing more eloquent than this farm. It is not a farm of wide fields and trim red outhouses; it is a slope on the river bank and, of course, fields back and beyond; but here on this shadowless slope sat Washington, typical boy of his time.

Here was the setting for the more than doubtful cherry tree story, and the scarcely more credible incident of the dollar thrown across the river. More interesting than either of these legends is the evidence unearthed by Mrs. A. B. Fothergill, of Richmond, from the Spotsylvania County records, that George used to go swimming naked in the Rappahannock and on one occasion two women stole his clothes. They were arrested.

The record reads:

"3 Dec. 1751. Ann Carrol and Mary McDaniel Senr. of Fredericksburgh, being Committed to the Goal of this County by William Hunter Gent on Suspicion of Felony and Charged with robing the Cloaths of Mr. George Washington when he was washing in the River some time last Summer, the Court having heard Several Evidences Are of Opinnion that the said Ann Carroll be discharged & Admitted an Evidence for our Lord the King against the said Mary McDaniel.

"And Upon Considering the hole evidence & the prisoners defence,The Court are of Oppinion that the said Mary McDaniel is guilty of petty Larceny, whereupon the said Mary desired immediate punishment for the sd Crime & relied on the Mercy of the Court, therefore it is ordered that the Sheriff carry her to the Whipping post & inflict fifteen lashes on her bare back. And then she be discharged."

William Hunter, "Gent," was a county justice. Washington had left for his Barbados trip several months before this grim sequel to the loss of his "cloaths" while "washing in the River."

If poppies bloom in Flanders, then has Fredericksburg's field of blood blossomed in hollyhocks; it is a city of them. Past all other relics of that splendid day of young dreams

and unexpected victories, the road leads to the home of Mary Washington.

It is a stiffish looking little house; one glance at the back garden approach and you know that the mistress herself often carried the pail of washing over that doorsill. It is so meagre and close-knit. There is still the garden, the very garden in which Mary greeted Lafayette, surely a meeting worthy of a painter's brush; for the garden is old, and perhaps never was young; with great bushes and box hedge and tall perennials and narrow paths, and wide-spread, low-branched trees. There they met, the great champion of liberties in two continents and the Tory mother of America's surpassing son of freedom. What said they one to another in that dimly eloquent patch of ground behind the stiffish little house?

The garden is friendly enough, as all Fredericksburg gardens are. Here it was that George used to protest that a certain species of rose bloomed earlier than it did in his garden at Mt. Vernon. Everything blooms early and long at Fredericksburg; especially the hollyhocks.

The garden stretched back of the house of Mary Washington, and along that path frequently she went until at the distance of a long block she entered straightway the rear gate of Kenmore, owned by her daughter "Betty," wife of Col. Lewis. Kenmore is one of the great restoration projects in Virginia, and a worthy one. It is one of the few remaining examples of Colonial simplicity, prosperity in homespun with fine clothes for the occasion; a home, grand enough, but still within the vision of an average well-to-do citizen. Yet Kenmore is elaborate.

Mary Washington would pass, on her short walk, what today is the last of the thirteen horse-chestnuts, planted by her son George, to shade that oft-trod path. He named the trees for the thirteen colonies, a fashion of the time. The planting recalls a cherishable story: George was chagrined at the stubborn persistence with which his mother continued to live in the old Ferry Farm home, across the river, where she was alone except for her servant. Betty Lewis offered the old lady a home and, in fact, there is a room at Kenmore, known in days gone by as "Old Miss Mary Washington's room." But she used it only on brief visits; her mood also was critical.

Washington finally built the house now known as Mary Washington's home, with a four-acre garden of fruit trees,

vines, flowers, box, vegetables, and so on. The box walk extended from his mother's home to the gate of Kenmore.

It took two years even after the house was built to persuade the indomitable Mary Ball Washington to move. She seems to have been very happy there when finally she accepted the new residence, and became famous for a gig, a small Negro boy on the floor to open gates, in which she made trips to the Farm to bring back a pitcher of water from the Washington spring.

Some say Mary Washington smoked a pipe. Her son George never smoked, thus setting a fine filial example to his headstrong parent. Many Colonial ladies smoked. R. C. Winthrop, in the "Life and Letters of John Winthrop," cites a letter from the wife of the Puritan Governor Winthrop to her husband (1627): "My good mother commends hir love to you all and thankes you for hir tobacko."

Whether Mary Washington smoked or not, Fredericksburg insists she had a high temper. Also, while her son's meticulous books contain constant references to payments made to her, and while it is evident he looked carefully after her affairs, and the children in general were solicitous toward her, she assumed frequently a querulous attitude. Rupert Hughes captured such an instance in M. D. Conway's "George Washington and Mt. Vernon." It is a letter written by Mary Washington to her son, John Augustine:

"Dear Johnne,—I am glad to hear you and all the family is well and should be glad if I could write you the same. I am a going fast, and it, the time, is hard. I am borrowing a little Cornn—no Cornn in the Cornn house. I never lived soe poore in my life. Was it not for Mr. French and your sister Lewis I should be almost starved, but I am like an old almanack quite out of date. Give my love to Mrs. Washington—all the family. I am dear Johnne your loving and affectionate Mother.

"P. S. I should be glad to see you as I don't expect to hold out long."

This seems to have stimulated the family to a vigorous insistence that she move to the house prepared for her.

Soon after the move, George was called to Cambridge for a purpose known to history. She did not see him for seven years. When, later, he returned for what both realized was a farewell, times had changed. Col. Fielding Lewis was dead; most of the fine land of Kenmore had been sacrificed to build-

ing lots; his fortune had gone into making the first guns possessed by the colonies. The very first land to go was that between the two houses.

George Washington was a constant adviser to his sister, Betty, and took a keen interest in the lovely home at Kenmore. In one handsome room, the decoration over the mantel was designed by him. It is well preserved and restored, and represents Aesop's fable of the Fox and the Crow.

Washington called Fredericksburg "the place of my growing infancy," as well he might. His mother lived there and thereabouts for a half century.

Betty lived at Kenmore for more than forty years. Here in Fredericksburg is the Masonic Lodge where George was initiated, raised and passed as Master Mason; part of the building is a restaurant, but to enter it you trip over one of the oldest stone sills, perhaps, in the United States.

You would pause at the memorial window to Mary Washington in St. George's church, if only to reflect that here the Rev. Patrick Henry, uncle of the orator, was the first rector. Then, too, there is a most eloquent obelisk marking the grave of Washington's mother, right on the very edge of the hill, where the rocks jut out as thrones from which to view the gorgeous panorama of the valley. Meditation Rock they call the one where Mary Washington came often to sit and brood . . . over peace and war, and sons who wage both and may be hanged for it. Chiefly, she read the Bible there, under six magnificent oaks. A spot carved by time as a shrine, indescribably significant, for history.

She held fast to a stern, conservative code; and spoke her mind. Fredericksburg is, in fact, her town, in spite of the associations enjoyed there by her illustrious son. It is, more especially, the town of the quiet, home-loving moderate folk of the day; hence the details of it. It supplements the more richly-embroidered life of the Barons with an essential ingredient; for Mary Washington is merely a type solidly built into the American nation. George belonged to Fredericksburg; he was a local boy, in every sense of the word, but events caught him up and whirled him into the ample life of the great men of his day, a life his by hereditary instinct no doubt, but far removed from the slumbering substance of Fredericksburg; where, however, the roses impudently bloomed earlier. He remained farmer enough to resent that.

Washington's imprint seems more legible on the steps of the Old Rising Sun Tavern, the stopping-place for those who traversed Virginia to the conventions north—Lafayette, Mason, Richard Henry Lee and many others. It was built by George Washington's brother, Charles, and its landlord, Weedon, became a major-general in the Revolutionary War. Weedon's notorious antagonism to George III and all his works gave his tavern a bad name; conservative men spoke of it as a 'hotbed of rebellion." Which was not an exaggeration.

It was the impromptu forum not only for Washington and Mason, but for Jefferson, Monroe, Randolph, Marshall, Mercer and—no less than John Paul Jones, whose old home has fallen into sad case a few blocks away, a despairing monument of an oft-despairing life.

Washington leaves a brief, eloquent memorandum: "Evening at the Rising Sun. Lost money as usual. The boys at Fredericksburg are too smart for me." The old ball-room was burned some years ago, but had a "good floor," according to another record and was thought suitable for the day's society to dance the minuet thereon. Its tap room was famous the length of the King's Highway. It was very old, as became a town named for the father of George III, and dating its legal townsite from 1727 — five years before the surprising George Washington was born.

In the beginning, before the days of which we now write, lots in Leaseland, or Fredericksburg, were to be had at forty shillings, and the building restrictions were simply "of Brick, Stone or Wood, well framed, of the Dimensions of Twenty Feet Square and nine Feet pitch, or at least apportionate thereto." Sales resistance, however, seems to have been considerable.

George bought the ground where the Mary Washington house was built, and that place is sacred because of his farewell to Mary Washington, if for nothing else. He kneeled down for her blessing, and the grim unrelenting Tory and proud mother united in the petition that he might "go forth and fulfill the destiny which heaven had prepared" for him.

Next to that stiffish but eloquent little house, fascination lingers around Hugh Mercer's apothecary shop. Mercer became acquainted with George Washington during the French and Indian wars; George was like a California booster and eventually persuaded Mercer to come to Fredericksburg. This was some time before the Revolution. Mercer was an immi-

grant from Scotland, and the apothecary establishment of the future colonel of the Third Virginia Regiment and, later, general, is still to be seen, a quiet, shrugged-up front with a hidden garden in the rear. The garden has box and gay flower beds . . . lavender from whose roots the jars in the shop may have been filled . . . rose petals for rose-water . . . thyme . . . this is a very old garden.

There was a young man named James Monroe, a student at William and Mary when the Revolution opened. He volunteered and fought with distinction at the Battle of Trenton. Not much time for him. He was born as near Fredericksburg as Washington was. His law office has become a museum. He was President of the United States.

There is the old Wellford House, with magic doorways. Dr. Wellford came to Fredericksburg in 1789, well-recommended; his letter of introduction was signed "George Washington." There is the Sentry Box, a very old and impressive house, from whose eye-window sentries watched through three wars. Gen. Mercer, the apothecary, and Gen. Weedon, the taverner, jointly owned it at one time. If stories were true, the folk living at the Sentry Box could have witnessed both George's depredation on the cherry tree and his feat with the silver dollar. But they left no record of either.

On the whole Fredericksburg is a small town, filled with hollyhocks and quiet memories. Mary Washington's tongue . . . the glorious Kenmore . . . the ruggedly convincing Ferry Farm; footsteps go hither and thither among these deep sunk paths. They made the Main Street of the Eighteenth Century, and of such is the nation which inherits from them.

CHAPTER VI

THE TWILIGHT OF THE BARONS

AN ITEM from the days of peace in the life of the Barons. Washington's Diary, Tuesday, Jan. 1, 1760:

"Visited my plantations and received an Instance of Mr. French's great love of Money in disappointing me of some Pork, because the price had risen to 22/6 after he had engaged to let me have it at 20/—.

"Called at Mr. Possey's in my way home and desired him to engage me 100 Bar'ls of Corn upon the best terms he could in Maryland.

"And found Mrs. Washington upon my arrival broke out with the Meazles."

The trivial things make up Everyman's history. The astounding baronial life along the Potomac is the story of the trivial, as it must be. Martha Washington "broke out with the Meazles" and Farmer Washington is indignant about the rise in pork.

For the length of the Potomac, from where the City of Washington now superbly stands down to a point opposite Mary's River, in Maryland, stretched the mansions of the Barons around whose wide acres clustered the homes of the lesser gentry. This was a neighborhood whose devious miles served only to emphasize the companionship inseparable from a society which had learned to know the value of hospitality.

During the years of peace that marked the prelude to and the beginnings of the Republic, this formed the scene of the last phase of the Barons; an age which inherited one sort of greatness and itself prepared another sort of greatness as a bequest. It was the day of Neighbor Washington and Neighbor Mason; of Bryan Fairfax, eighth lord of the line, eccentric, genial rector of Alexandria's Christ Church; of the dashing "Jacky" Parke Custis; of Nelly, the darling of Washington's latter days; of Dr. Craik, of Lafayette, of great rosters of great visitors and greater friends who passed across the river to live a little history in the shadow of a growing legend.

Poor Bryan Fairfax! He hammered long and hard at his friend, Washington, to stick by the King: "Altho' I wish it as

Upper left: Looking toward the box-hedge from Gunston Hall. Upper right: Gunston Hall. Center: Mt. Vernon, showing characteristic placing of subordinate buildings on a Virginia estate. Lower left: Ruins of Abingdon, oldest residence neighboring Washington. Lower right: Woodlawn, Nelly Custis's home.

much as any one that we were legally exempted from it, yet I hold it clearly that we ought to abide by our Constitution."

To which Washington answers that he perceives it to be "as clear as the sun in its meridian brightness that there is a regular, systematic plan formed to fix the right and practice of taxation upon us." He now sees that his old comrade Gage is acting like "a Turkish bashaw." He challenges the right of Britain's Parliament "to put their hands in my pocket without my consent." Troubled, momentous conversations!

Washington's last social call of his life was on Lord Bryan Fairfax, at whose home, Mt. Eagle, he dined. Bryan Fairfax sleeps, somewhat neglected, just outside Alexandria. Mt. Eagle stood across Big Hunting Creek, overlooking the town.

The two extremes among the relics of the famous houses are Abingdon, directly across from Washington and the mouth of the Anacostia River, and Gunston Hall, four miles below Mt. Vernon, "as the crow flies," but numerous twisting miles by forest road.

Abingdon is the oldest house anywhere in the neighborhood. The visitor will discover it with much difficulty. It is now a ruin of a place, in a neighborhood of shacks, and separated from the lower Washington-Alexandria highway by railroad tracks and other unbeautiful interferences. From this ruin at the water's edge there is a fine view of the City of Washington, and an even finer introspective review of lost glory.

Abingdon was built by John Alexander, Jr., (of Alexandria) before 1677. It passed through several generations of Alexanders. Finally it was purchased by Jacky Custis, when that dashing son of Martha Washington married Eleanor Calvert, of Mt. Airy, Md. He paid $60 an acre for the property. Everyone knows the paternal guardianship exercised by George Washington over his wife's children. Abingdon, therefore, became a pivotal point in the neighborhood life.

The house reverted subsequently to the Alexanders. At the outbreak of the Civil War it was owned by Bushrod Washington Hunter, of the Confederate Navy. The place was confiscated and sold for taxes. Suit for the heirs was brought by Jeremiah Black and James A. Garfield, part of the land going as fee. Recently the Garfield estate sold their remaining acres. At last record the property was owned by Lewis E. Smoot, of Washington.

Eleven generations passed across the threshold of the crumbling old house which, in the Washington day, was one of

the social centers of the countryside. It was built, says Mary G. Powell, of lumber hewn by slaves from the native forests, the joists on the ground floor being the size of a man's body. Some of the Washington furniture went to it, and some more went to Woodlawn, the home built for Nelly Custis on land given to this much beloved granddaughter of Martha Washington, in whom George Washington centered his huge love for children. The marriage of Nelly to Lawrence Lewis took place at Mt. Vernon, on the last birthday of George Washington.

Woodlawn, until his death the home of former United States Senator Oscar Underwood, stands as proud and comely as ever on the hillside to the right of the Richmond pike, just a little beyond the Mt. Vernon turn-off.

Then there is Mt. Ida, on the upper Alexandria road, with a matchless view of the Potomac. This was another Alexander home. Charles Alexander, Jr., was in possession of it about 1813, and claimed the title of Earl of Sterling. His ancestor, Charles, Sr., married one of the nine celebrated daughters of Dr. Gustavus Brown, of Maryland, from whom many Virginians are said to be descended. A sister-in-law visited the Alexanders at Mt. Ida, a strong-willed, indomitable lady. One day she stumbled and then slid down the stairway of Mt. Ida with such force that she shot out of the door and over the bluff, apparently without serious injury. "With characteristic energy" she immediately set about planting a lilac hedge along the top of the bluff to prevent it happening a second time. Remains of this hedge are still to be seen.

Richard Washington now owns this queer white house, and with infinite pains and touching discrimination is slowly furnishing it with family heirlooms. Near Mt. Ida is a staunch brick house, "Windsor," across whose acres the highroad has been cut. During the Civil War it was converted to the use of freedmen. Now it is the comfortable home of Philip Campbell, former representative from Kansas.

These houses are dissimilar, yet each remains characteristic and beautifully unspoiled by the renovator's hand.

The great contrasting residence to dilapidated Abingdon is Gunston Hall. Now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Louis Hertle, it is a great house today as it was when George Mason, its builder, wrote the Virginia Bill of Rights. Unlike Mt. Vernon, which is necessarily something of a museum, Gunston Hall is still a home, and it is still possible to be favored there with the gracious hospitality of the large hall, and meditate in an

ancient richly-panelled room where brave voices debated to good purpose.

It is reached by a considerable penetration of attractive woodland, the winding dirt road making tortuous progress from the direction of Pohick Church. It is, in fact, charmingly isolated on Mason's Neck from civilization; and the visitor, approaching it through the woods, gets a handsome idea of the remoteness of these old forest-bound palaces of the past.

There is still the famous box-hedge, "the height of two men," between which one looks, as Charles Moore well puts it, "from the rear portico, to see at the vista's end the blue waters of the Potomac and the Maryland hills. What a procession has passed down that box alley since first it was planted!"

Between Gunston Hall and Mt. Vernon much of the baronial activity of the time flourished. Mason and Washington were close friends, borrowing money one from the other. When Washington arrived in his six-oared gig he would approach the house along that box alley, and if he arrived by coach then his entrance to the house was at the head of this magnificent walk. These famous gardens saw Lafayette, Rochambeau, Jefferson, Madison, Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee. Its hospitality is unchanged, and today's statesmen and leaders travel there to tread those paths and conjure nobility from the unfading legend.

The fox-hunt started frequently from one or the other of the two houses. Washington records, over a period of six years, attending 155 fox hunts, 85 times without success, but with a total bag of 71 dead foxes and a "Rakoon." There was deer hunting and duck shooting also, and fishing, for which Washington cared little (except commercially); and pheasant shooting, for which he cared less.

Between Mt. Vernon and Gunston Hall stood Belvoir, the Fairfax mansion, and, literally, the court of baronial days.

When that old flame of Washington's, Sally Cary, and her husband, Col. George William Fairfax, sailed to England never to return, the house of so much splendor stood ghost-like and empty. Finally Washington attended the sale of its effects and had the melancholy satisfaction of buying in a card table; something always useful at Mt. Vernon. Now Belvoir has vanished with many another. It burned down before a purchaser could be found.

Neighbors depended on each other in those days. Sally

Fairfax obtained the services of a good needle-woman to make Washington some shirts. Washington, on his side, records "To 6 best Dutch Blanket lent" to the Fairfax household for some emergency, which, according to an entry on the next page, were faithfully returned.

Lord Fairfax, from over at Greenway Court, near Winchester, could come to the Potomac for the hunt, he himself possessing some fine dogs. When the great Baron was living at Belvoir, a member of his household sent the following note to a neighbor:

"Dear Sir:

"His Lordship purposes drawing Mudd Hole tomorrow; first killing a Fox; then to turn down a bagged Fox before your door for ye diversion of ye Ladies; but I would not have you think that we shall stop a long time at y'r door, for if y'r dinner should be ready by two then we shall pass through y'r door and enter y'r House . . . If you should chuse Friday for our coming lett me know. We took the Fox yesterday without Hurt."

Similarly the lords of the Potomac enjoyed boat-racing, not only on their own river, but on the lower water, to which they would journey. Fithian writes of such a gala day at Tappahannock (then called Hobb's Hole) on the Rappahannock, where forty-five ladies and sixty-five gentlemen, including himself, not only watched the race from the deck of a ship, but were given by the captain "an elegant entertainment." He mentions a ball that night, at the house of Mr. Ritchie, a wealthy merchant of the town—two fiddlers furnishing music for the minuet and other dances—and adds, with some enthusiasm:

"Dolly Edmundson, a short, pretty, stump of a girl, danced well, sung a song with great applause and seemed to enter into the spirit of the entertainment. Mr. Ritchie's clerk, a limber, well-dressed, pretty handsome chap seemed fond of her and she of him . . . and waited on her home, in close hugg too, the moment he left the ballroom."

As for the rest of the company, those who apparently did not have a pretty stump of a girl who could be so pleasant to her escort, they stayed out the party and "got to bed by three."

In those golden years between the return of Washington from the frontier wars—or, toward the close of the French war—and the troubled time of the Revolution, the Barons were happy men. It was an age of ripeness, the ripening of

well-planned fortunes and the ripening of institutions and the ripening of ideas for the refining of both. No one then dreamed of Independence, even though societies began to emerge whose sentiments were of doubtful loyalism to the King of England. The Barons were Cavaliers, not Puritans, and the rosy life went on accordingly. Well might George Washington bid in a card-table at the Belvoir sale; Mt. Vernon could use it.

Fithian's dance was a mild one; some of them lasted, literally, for several days; in mere justification, perhaps, of the distances the guests had traveled. Some guests remained indefinitely; others stayed a night and were replaced by new guests; nearby guests departed home and returned accompanied by others.

Fithian was in one of these majestic entertainments also. On arrival Monday he found the gentlemen playing cards in the cloak-room. Dinner was at 4:30. "The Ladies dined first, when some Good Order was preserved; when they rose, each nimblest Fellow dined first." Fithian thought the dinner excellent, adding, circumstantially: "For Drink there were several sorts of Wine, good Lemon Punch, Toddy, Cyder, Porter, &c.—" There were minuets, "Giggs," Reels, Country Dances, and Marches; and "The Ladies were Dressed Gay, and splendid & when dancing, their Skirts & Brocades rustled and trained behind them!" The lad had a sharp eye. Some played cards in other rooms; some were "drinking for Pleasure" and some sang "Liberty Songs . . . in which six, eight, ten or more would put their Heads near together and roar. & for the most part unharmonious . . . At eleven," he concludes abruptly, "Mrs. Carter called upon me to go."

Two days later, the dance was still on, Mrs. Carter resting at home. Ben Carter came home late that night, apparently the last dog. In the morning the tutor notes that Ben "looks fatigued out," which is not surprising. On Friday everyone seemed much better, and it developed that the host had begged everyone to stay and keep it up a little longer, a day or so anyway.

And this degenerate age thinks it knows how to Make Whoopee!

The makeshift environment that persisted long after the Revolution, gave a strange flavor to many of the gentry. There was young Bob Carter. Paul Wilstach quotes a description of Bob, which characterizes him thus: "He is slovenly,

clumsy, very fond of Shooting, of Dogs, of Horses . . . It is the custom with our Bob whenever he can coax a dog upstairs, to take him into his Bed, and make him a companion," but when it came to Bob's passion for the horse, "He rides excessive hard, & would ride always . . . Neither Heat, nor Cold, nor Storm can stay him."

Featured guests of the River entertainments were the sea captains newly-arrived in the Potomac from abroad with welcome cargoes. Most of the sea-captains proved indifferent dancers, being inclined to wobble, to the mirth of the Assembly and the subsequent derision of the ladies. While the captain danced the crew usually got into trouble on the plantation, flirting, doing damage of one sort or another, and picking a fight or two.

News came with each guest and departed with him. Letters were passed on, and papers too, from house to house, by slave or other courier, the messenger bringing back what grist might be available from his house of call. The news was always old, but it was still news. In the course of time it traveled from Annapolis to Mt. Airy, to Abingdon, Alexandria, Mt. Vernon and Gunston Hall, to Dumfries and Stafford and Falmouth, to Stratford and Bushfield, to Sabine Hall, to the old White House home of Martha Custis, to Shirley and Westover and Wenanoke on the James, and back again.

Doubtless so journeyed tiding that Washington had added new acres to his Potomac estate, and perhaps there were carried as well some of those famous recipes compounded by Martha. They may be found in The Fitzpatrick Diaries. "To keep ye Hayre Clean and Improve It"; "To Make Sweet Water to Perfum Cloaths in ye foulding after they are Washed"; "To Keep Teeth Clean & White and to Fasten Them." There is a face cleanser, and a way to wash silk stockings with the least damage, and "A Perfume to Stand in a Roome":

"Take two or three quarts of roses buds or ye leaves of damask roses & put them in a pot with bay salt, 3 or 4 grayns of musk & as much of embergreece, 20 or 30 drops of oyle of rodium, a litle benjamin & storeax, beat together in a cheyney pot or any other yt is handsome & keep it allways closed, but when you have a mind to leave yr roome sweet you must take of ye cover."

George Washington, for his own part, had his recipe for making beer, and yet another, as it appeared, for making republics.

There was a twilight suffusion over all these leisurely years. The slaves went about their work, were punished, rewarded, or "sent away." Slavery itself became distasteful, to such men as Washington, Jefferson and Monroe, with no effective solution in sight. The responsibility was great, and the Barons made poor taskmasters, while the slave often gave as much time to avoiding work as he did to the performance of it. It was not a bitter age; just human, and, on the whole, a rough-handed but clean-minded humanity, filled with all manner of formal scruples to offset all manner of indulgences.

The remarkable thing was the steady encroachment of duty on the regal leisure of the Barons. Where, in the beginning, as we saw it down the rivers, the Estate was a kingdom among kingdoms, time brought complexities inseparable from community life. Interest began to divide itself among a dozen demands on time and service. The Baron became not only a vestryman, but a town trustee; and what seemed at first an honor tendered with obeisance turned out to be a substantial obligation, for leadership naturally was sought among those who stood high, and especially among those whose experience in their little kingdoms might suggest ways and means. In this encroachment of duty on the baronial independence is to be found the real birth of what we term American national consciousness, the enlargement of the citizen, the modification of the baronial aloofness, and the blending of the two in many common and necessary pursuits.

Reflecting on the huge land grants, the shady deals that subsequently disposed of kingdoms and principalities, the casual gifts and careless boundaries, the confusion of such cases as that of Denny Fairfax and his Northern Neck inheritance, the confiscations and restorations of the Revolution, it is strange enough, in view of all this changing ownership and temporary bitterness that these men, the high and the low, fastened desperately to the anchor of legal forms. If there was trickery it was done by sharp lawyers. There was no wild-handed, jubilant usurpation, nor dictatorial preemption anywhere.

The strange civilization of the rivers had built an Empire of free men and their slaves, and among them was the good sense that orderliness must govern even a frontier. It is not as if just one genius of government emerged to lead an ignorant, blind people to reformation; that which emerged was a com-

mon growth, evolved from a new environment which had become proud of itself and proud of that which it produced.

These men who danced and played cards and drank and gambled, nevertheless found time to govern and, to begin with, governed themselves. Their women folk were held as reverently as any women in the history of the world, the while they sewed and supervised and bore the multitudes of children. Their children might take a dog to bed, or ride without fear of storm, but they rode straight for the most part and feared nothing.

The panorama of the Potomac, of the Rappahannock, of the James and the York, but particularly the first, is one of magnificent leisure and rough energy in which men stretched out and gathered in life by double handfuls. It was a form of liberty, tempered to gentility by the rigors of a new land, and nothing like it existed before or since. The few clocks told the time, but few noted the passing of the hours.

It was not until such time as Henry and Mason and Washington and many others began to yield to the importunities of events that time began for them. Then, in a few years, the days of the Barons became a memory to sigh after. The responsibility of nation-making is severely jealous. With that tremendous change in the direction of men's minds there came prophecy, anxiety, anticipation. Certainly no man of so deliberate and practical a mind as Washington could pursue such a task to its immediate consummation without looking into the future. A rabble won the war, and it remained for the leaders to see that the victory was justified by those who won it. So, in the camps and tents and at the councils, they looked abroad over the limitless land, to whose narrow margin they had won the right, and meditated on what all this should mean.

CHAPTER VII

THE BARON BECOMES PLANTER-FARMER

THERE is a tranquil period in this history which needs must find place, if only to complement the atmosphere of picnic with which the more obvious and interesting doings and sayings of the time surround themselves. For some reason, it is more exciting to learn Fithian's intimate observations on social manners than it is to know who actually trimmed George Mason's box hedge, or how much of Washington's land was under profitable cultivation.

Yet there is a growing interest in the lawns and trees and flower gardens, evidence of the affectionate companionship with which the Barons made a partner of nature. These enduring glories which have outlived a great age have become the majestic frame of history. It begins to appear that a vista may have something to do with the enlargement of the spirit, that space is a stimulating environment for the commonplaces, that charm, so variously sought, already exists for the preserving. It would be possible to tell of this tranquil, constructive period in the life of any one of fifty Barons who, in the great transition, turned Planter-Farmer. If George Washington is selected, the reasons are obvious. What the eye reads it also may behold; though more eyes will behold than will read.

Here, where the lawn steps down to meet the shimmering mile of water, Washington planted an American elm. Today, one of the sentinels of the mansion at Mt. Vernon, it towers ninety-one feet high, challenging the Maryland hills on the opposite shore. The home of Farmer Washington is a tranquil place; it belongs to a frame of mind almost wholly vanished. But when the pilgrimage through the house is completed, and the eyes have begun to peer in vain for figures which are no more, but whose presence seems so vividly suggested, you step out to meet the sunshine, and the snuff of foliage envelops you. Then you meet, indeed, the spirit of a beautiful past.

The venerable barn, wrapped in ivy; the peaceful farmyards; the lazy, low-hung buildings, all of these echo with steps that vanish just before you round each twist of wall.

But the intimate work so dear to Washington's heart is in the surrounding grounds. The noble view from the portico, with its matchless sweep of river and shore, is the dazzling frame for it. It begins, this work, with the stately circle of the bowling green, and ends down below the rolling deer run, where the willows weep ever into the Potomac.

It is Wordsworth's "brotherhood of venerable trees." As Washington planned and planted, so, due to a reverent posterity, are the gardens and lawns today. In simplicity and fragrance the first of shrines; in reposeful influence the tonic of a nation.

There are today two hundred important trees standing near the mansion, many of them planted during Washington's life-time; others were added, but almost invariably in sympathy with his original designs for the estate, so far as these are known. Washington himself searched far and wide for the trees he wanted; he wrote to his friends in various parts of America, and abroad. Thus it comes to pass that the estate is a spot beloved of forester and horticulturist, and the less sophisticated visitor wonders at the spell, gazes up into the spreading trees, and permits the eye to linger caressingly on green sward and shelving shores; giving over his spiritual burdens to the bosom of the Potomac.

Washington's Diary informs us he was active in January of 1785, locating elm-trees for the grounds. The majestic American elm on the west lawn probably was one of the trees obtained at that time. It is partnered on the east lawn by a very fine white ash, also planted by Washington. Its height is eighty-nine feet. He was fond of the American elm, and there are at least ten of these trees near the mansion, some of them, however. of later planting. Of the original elms, two flank the wall, fringing the bowling green on the east side, ninety and eighty feet tall, respectively. Two are picturesquely placed between the office and the gardener's house, although this pair may be more recent. A fine elm, eighty feet tall, stands on the east lawn behind the white ash, and in the corresponding corner on the west lawn is a younger ash, sixty-two feet tall.

The bowling green, between the two gardens, is an attractive study. At once attention is captured by the twin beech trees planted by Washington in the corners of the narrow end near the mansion. Their height, eighty-nine and ninety feet, is accentuated by their tall, straight trunks, and they form impressive focusing columns for the opening sweep of lawn

stretching between the two gardens. On the west side, the next tree is an eighty-three-foot ash planted by Washington, and across from it two coffee-bean trees, one of them a Washington tree, and another Washington coffee-bean across the path by the flower-garden; the three form an impressive and effective group. The two older trees are eighty-seven feet tall. A fourth, of Washington's planting, is a little back, by the flower garden gate.

A few yards beyond is a pair of young white pines. These are relatively recent. Washington speaks in his Diary of planting pine trees, but is supposed to have referred to the common pine of that region.

The next important tree, along the serpentine walk, is the fine sugar maple planted by Washington and now ninety-one feet tall, with a diameter of trunk three feet eleven inches. He planted also, but on the other side and farther north, a red maple, which is eighty-five feet tall and in fine condition. Across from the sugar maple he planted a yellow poplar, the tallest of three he planted, and now standing. It is a superb tree, one hundred and twenty feet tall; the other two are on opposite sides of the green, not far away. At the foot of one of them is a box, one of the handsomest and most interesting at Mt. Vernon. It is one of three planted by the Baron-Farmer, and is twenty-one feet tall, with graceful, drooping branches.

Allusion has been made to coffee beans planted by Washington. There is one of these Kentucky coffee trees supposedly planted by Lafayette; it stands between the serpentine walk and the flower garden, having for neighbors on one side a hemlock, on the other a holly, and in front a buckeye, all of Washington's planting. Close by stands also a magnificent linden, eighty-four feet tall, with a splendid trunk four feet three inches in diameter. There are several beautiful lindens in the neighborhood of the bowling green, all of great height. One of the finest stands at the library end of the mansion, partnered on the other side of the mansion by a second; neither was planted by Washington, however.

Of four notable honey locusts, the one standing between the kitchen garden and the serpentine walk is credited to Washington. This is a fast-growing and short-lived tree, and others probably disappeared. He makes note in his Diary that on March 23, 1780, he planted "between seventeen thousand and eighteen thousand seeds of the honey-locust."

The seven buckeyes have a special interest, for instead of the common yellow flowers, these have red, pink, and flesh-colored flowers. Moreover, the records show Washington gathered the seeds from which the trees were grown, near the mouth of Cheat River, in what is now West Virginia. The Diary also mentions planting four horse chestnuts, but it is considered doubtful if either of the three big trees there now was among them.

Mention has been made of the American elms, for which Washington was very solicitous; there is also, near the kitchen gardens, a European cork elm. The three pecan trees, all on the front lawns, are trees of history. They were given to Washington by Jefferson, who in 1784 first published a technical description of this tree, and apparently was the first distributor of living plants brought from the Mississippi Valley. They are the oldest of the trees planted by Washington.

Washington appreciated the beauty of the native holly, and there still stand thirteen specimens planted by him. He also mentions planting hemlocks, magnolias (which he says he received from South Carolina), dogwoods, redbuds, and sassafras, some of which linger and flourish.

Two curiosities may be noted. One is a Cedar of Lebanon, near the summer-house. It is now fifty-nine feet tall and the only exotic tree on the grounds. The other is a solitary (and symbolic) cherry tree on the east lawn. Apparently it grew from a casual seed from one of Washington's garden cherry trees.

Many trees that Washington mentions having planted are no longer to be found there; these include aspen, black haw, balsam, chestnut, crab, fringe, Gloucester hickory, live oak, mahogany, Mediterranean pine, native pine, palmetto, pawpaw, pistachio, pride of China, small-berried thorn, Spanish chestnut, shellbark hickory, spruce pine, swamp magnolia, water oak, yew. But of what he did plant a small forest remains, a remarkable tribute to the painstaking character of his attention to the estate.

It is interesting, and not without a touch of sublimity, to behold these splendid trees, set forth by Washington's own hand, now casting their long shadows over the lawns he trod, their life spanning the history of the nation. Washington was not the only Baron of his time who sought to create a beautiful environment for his leisure. Virginia possesses a princely list of them, although most that are worthy of their past are in

private hands. It illumines the character of the Barons to contemplate this leisurely and wholesome devotion to beauty and fitness which is a pregnant link between the two phases of civilization they themselves joined together, the pioneer and the home-loving citizen.

How rich the Mount Vernon grounds are in foliage today may be seen from this summary of the trees planted after 1914, for the future beautification of the mansion's setting. These are 1,700 dogwoods, 117 redbuds, 36 yews, 78 hollies, 18 fringe trees, 12 live oaks, 12 laurel oaks, 9 hemlocks, 6 magnolias, 2 swamp magnolias, 3 white pines, 1 linden, 10 tupelos, 255 red cedars, 101 native pines and 250 English hawthornes.

The bowling green and its circle of trees bespeaks intimacy. The east and west lawns are inspiration. The very shapes of the trees and their varied shades form endless vistas in which tranquillity ever is the keynote.

Scarcely in this world is there a shrine to equal it; scarcely could there be a finer, a more moving monument than these symbols of eternity, these ever-living trees, preaching their recurrent lessons of birth, long fruition, decay, and rebirth. It is all so simple, so artlessly perfect. Not an ornament is there, not an obelisk, not a pile of bronze.

Velvet lawns, quiet shrubs, low-hanging trees, perfumed gardens, and the gentle hum of the summer air, reposeful, purifying; and unwinding itself between the twin ranges of hills, the Potomac and the everlasting enigma of the waters.

It is what it is: the home of a gentleman, who loved not only the world but the earth; in it he planted his inheritance. We share it.

CHAPTER VIII

THE KING'S HIGHWAY

AT first it was the Indians. Then it was the French and the Indians. Finally it was King George's Redcoats and the Hessian mercenaries. In the end it was Revolution. But that was not in the mind of Lieut.-Gen. Dinwiddie, of Virginia, when he commissioned young Washington; neither was it in the mind of energetic Benjamin Franklin, who busied himself to supply the fatal columns on the frontier of Virginia and Pennsylvania. Certainly it was not in the mind of young Washington.

He was more than a little jealous of the superior rank held by the British regular officers. The records illuminate such controversies. Braddock understood and liked him; stubborn, condemned old Braddock; Gen. Edward Braddock, tough and tried and sometimes misjudged.

The Braddock episode comes by way of a preparatory school for later and larger events. Alexandria becomes history because of it. The contrast between Braddock's day and the twilight of Cornwallis colors the dramatic prologue to the birth of a nation. The Barons sent their sons to keep the frontiers; in the end there came a bewildering confusion of identities; comrades-in-arms at Great Meadows became battle-foes outside Boston. As in the case of Gage. Meanwhile they all learned to measure weapons; and the Virginians discovered that the Redcoats did not always win.

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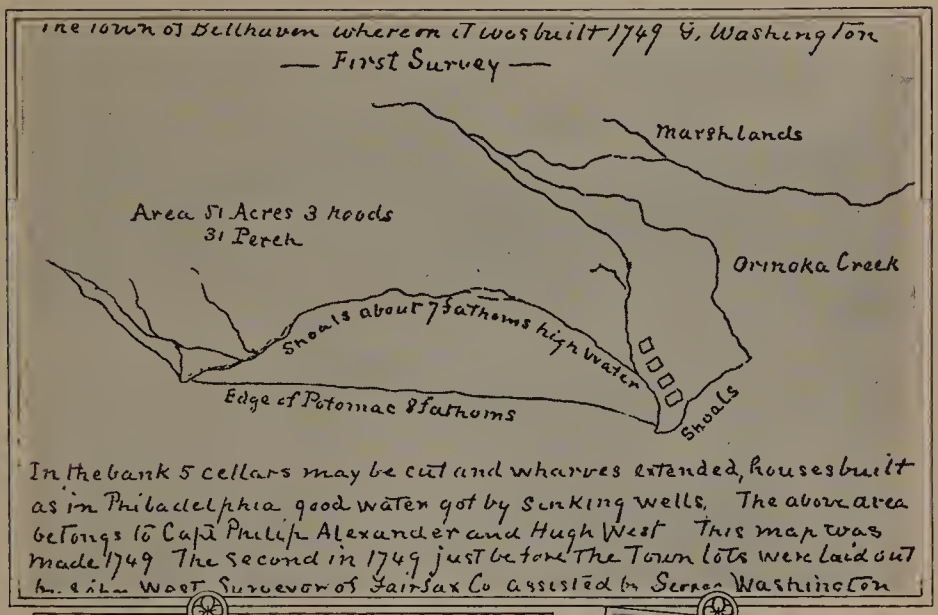
The old City Tavern of Alexandria was a convenient headquarters. The market square in front was suitable for drilling the Virginia Rangers. Not far off was Col. Carlyle's house, with its flavor of romance still perfuming the dismal neighborhood in which it stands. Here the gruff Braddock assembled the governors—Dinwiddie, of Virginia; Sharpe, of Maryland; Shirley, of Massachusetts (for whom Washington conceived a high regard); De Lancey, of New York; Morris, of Pennsylvania. The meeting was in the Blue Room, and not much came of it.


The Town of Belhaven whereon it was built 1749 G. Washington
— First Survey —
Marsh lands
Area 51 Acres 3 roods
31 Perch
Orinoka Creek
Shoals about 7 fathoms high water
Edge of Potomac 8 fathoms
Shoals
In the bank 5 cellars may be cut and wharves extended, houses built as in Philadelphia good water got by sinking wells. The above area belongs to Capt Philip Alexander and Hugh West This map was made 1749 The second in 1749 just before The Town lots were laid out by Wm West Surveyor of Fairfax Co assisted by Geo Washington

Upper: Washington's survey of Belhaven (Alexandria). Left: Ruins of the first monument to Washington, near the National Trail. Right: Gen. Braddock. Lower: Washington's headquarters at Will's Creek, now Cumberland, Md.

Col. John Carlyle, for one, and William Ramsay, lord mayor in 1761, "with a gold chain," had early gathered around them the gentry of town and countryside. The balcony of the Carlyle house saw many romances of colonial days, and doubtless those rival beauties. Miss Woodrow and Miss Fortenay, viewed the moon from such a choice vantage before returning to the celebrated Blue Room with a new dancing partner.

Alexandria forms the typical narrative of colonial commerce. It is the market town and port, and the community center for its district, as well as the active base for the operations which showed the young colonial leaders how to make war. It was essentially the town of the planter-merchant.

Its history begins several miles south, at Dumfries, now the "deserted village" of the King's Highway between Washington and Fredericksburg.

Dumfries was founded by the Scotch, who came to build warehouses for tobacco shipments. Dumfries flourished and fortunes were made. But there was a subsidence of Quantico Creek, which left the warehouses high and dry and inaccessible from the deep water. Carlyle and Ramsay were the chief of those who journeyed north in search of a new harbor.

The tobacco warehouse had become essential. Tobacco forming the supreme product of the colony, laws controlled its cultivation; inspection became necessary. The London merchant graded his price by the quality he received, a circumstance on which George Washington comments bitterly more than once. The tobacco was packed in hogsheads through which an iron rod was passed, serving as axle. Rough shafts were added, oxen harnessed up, and tobacco rolled down the "rolling-road" to the warehouse.

The Scots from Dumfries chose what is now known as Alexandria, formerly Belhaven, for the Earl of Belhaven. The town subsequently built occupied part of the original Howsing grant of 6,000 acres from Sir William Berkeley, because Robert Howsing brought "into the Colony of Virginia 120 persons to inhabit." John Alexander bought the grant from Howsing one year later for six hundredweight of tobacco. The Alexanders became a notable family and their name was fittingly commemorated in the new town, in laying out which the county surveyor, John West, Jr., had the assistance of a young man named George Washington.

When the municipal government was organized, the community was divided into 66 lots of a half-acre each and at

the first sale the average price of lots was $78. Carlyle bought the first one offered, on the waterfront in the center. Wooden chimneys were forbidden and, in fact, most of the houses were substantial and of brick. Swine were forbidden to run at large, but paid little attention to the restriction until the law gave anyone the right to shoot them.

While tobacco remained for long the chief business, mills were built on every river, wheat and corn were raised, and the Virginia ham made its qualities immortal.

George Washington's diary and correspondence refer to his experiments with a new grain called buckwheat. Mary G. Powell, in her invaluable work on the history of Old Alexandria, keeps pretty close tab on Mr. Washington's civic activities, which were comprehensive.

Washington became a trustee of Alexandria in 1766; it was characteristic of his meticulous mind that he got a law passed providing for a weights and measure department, and a market tester to make annual inspection. He also was suspicious enough to demand a hay scale, as well as a four-foot rule for measuring lumber. The original measures, obtained in England, are Alexandria's most venerable relics.

In the famous year of 1774, Friendship Fire Company was organized, a rival company, the Sun, appearing a year later. Washington was an honorary member of Friendship and, having certain business in Philadelphia with reference to the 1774 Congress, found time to purchase there a fire engine on behalf of the company. That is a significant thing; it is the joining of the Baron and the merchant; the reduction into small focus of the vast social organization of that spacious age; a revelation of the simplicity and expediency which were fundamental to those times.

Among honest and well-mannered men the line drawn was thin enough. The population was too scant for it to be otherwise; the necessities too numerous. When it came time for Alexandria to build a town hall (before Washington became a trustee) subscriptions were officially encouraged, as Miss Powell records, by general treating. In the auditor's office is an entry (1759): "To cash for treat at Summer's two and one-half gallons of rum and sugar, nineteen shillings and one penny." The building, two-story, was soon up.

As in the baronies, so in the towns there was much of makeshift. Punishment was one. Alexandria had its whipping post, and a little-used pillory. In earliest days there was also branding on the hand with the key of the court house door

—a punishment distasteful even to those who inflicted it. Alexandria cherishes the records of some of its more gifted "public executioners." One was named "Bobtail Bowie," and another, Neale, paused between the strokes of the lash to lecture the victim, which was entertaining to the onlookers, and probably had a marked effect on the culprit also.

Clearly the baronies had brought themselves close to the market-towns, of which Alexandria was the first and most interesting example. The Barons became a little weary of growing tobacco, which, they declared, impoverished the soil, and which was subject to serious shrinkage when the grading for quality began. They became gentleman-farmers, raised stock, and bred cattle; they experimented with trees, shrubs and plants. They paid attention to their fisheries, which were important. Alexandria's Fishtown was a notable place in its day.

Capt. John Posey, of an important Maryland family, was especially proud of his potatoes. A friend meeting him at a dance, pointed out a certain young girl and commented on her beauty. "Why not?" replied Posey, "she was raised on my potatoes."

The gentlemen farmers gave a flavor to the Inns or Ordinaries, even when some among them, like Washington, built a "town house" in Alexandria for over-night convenience. The bricks for his house probably came from the Mt. Vernon kiln, the upper part being frame. It was a small affair, but useful to accommodate visitors on their way to and from Mt. Vernon.

Everybody used the Inns, nevertheless, at some time or other. Writing in 1759, Archbishop Burnaby, a visitor, wrote: "Inns were called ordinaries in America and were peculiar to the South. They were kept by gentlemen, and only such were entertained. Like a modern club house, the meals were served at a fixed hour, and the manager presided."

Later they became more conventional as we understand it. Casual travelers could find hospitality although some of them seem not to have deserved it. The City Tavern, already referred to as Washington's hotel at the time he was drilling the Virginia Rangers in the Market Square before it, saw a notable meeting, in 1778, between the wistful, strong-headed, dapper John Paul Jones and Lafayette. LaFayette and Baron DeKalb were in the stable yard, having difficulty making the hostler understand them. Jones knew French and stepped forward with a phrase of the best and politest French. The

three dined together, traveled to Philadelphia together, and founded a firm friendship.

It is strange how substantial some of these buildings were. It is possible to marvel at the comfort and beauty of a charming brick house on Princess street, the residence of Gardner L. Boothe. It seems incredible that this home, richly simple and most livable, was "topped off" on the day George Washington died.

Civilization and time have combined to undo much; among other things they have fenced in Christ Church, which was a lovely courting ground in the time of Washington. Rabbits lived in that graveyard, and boys also, when they could. The great trees sheltered ever-encroaching undergrowth; it was, for all practical purposes, a park. Some of the ancient tombstones were carted away for use as door-steps. . . .

* * *

It is sought here to show a civic-communal growth, a typical community which has its prototypes today, changed only insofar as progress has altered the methods of living. The transition of the Baron was from Baron to gentleman-farmer to citizen, and something of all these lingered to the end. When Alexandria had its first recorded large-scale celebration, the pen of George Washington, River Baron and Town Trustee, recorded it.

The nine requisite States had accepted the Federal Constitution, and naturally Washington was among those present at the great banquet ordered by the people of Alexandria. A letter of Washington, dated June 28, 1788, says:

"No sooner had the citizens of Alexandria, who are Federal to a man, received the intelligence last night by the mail than they determined to devote the day to festivity, but their exhilaration was greatly increased, and a much keener zest given to their enjoyment by the arrival of an express two hours before the day, with the news that the New Hampshire Convention had, on the 21st instant, acceded to the new Confederacy by a majority of eleven voices. Thus the citizens of Alexandria, when convened, constituted the first public assembly in America which had the pleasure of pouring a libation to the prosperity of the General Government." The blow-out was held at the City Tavern.

The birthday of the man who had become Alexandria's greatest son, Baron-Farmer-Citizen Washington, became a

very special affair, and the last birthday of his lifetime was one of the greatest days in the history of the community. The editor of the Alexandria Gazette (a newspaper now nearing its hundred and fiftieth year), took a deep breath and then apologized at his insufficient talents to do justice to the subject. Then he sailed in with "Aurora rose with more than common splendour—." In the next sentence he added that "She was ushered in by a discharge from the Alexandria Artillery, and a Federal salute from the armed schooner Neptune—."

The Great Man reviewed the parade where, in addition to the Artillery which performed at day-break, there were Capt. Rogerson's Silver Greys, the Alexandria Blues, the Riflemen, the Alexandria Dragoons, Fairfax Dragoons, Volunteer Dragoons. There was a sham battle which reflected much credit on both sides. There was "elaborate" dinner at four different places, "and the wines served were such as to please the most refined tastes. Toasts were drunk"—and the evening closed with a ball, "where all the beauty and fashion of the countryside assembled" and where, in addition, there were elegant decorations and "an illuminated portrait of Washington."

Figures, great and strange, flit across these distant scenes. There were boys — the bad Hallowell boys — who rang the church bells at midnight and committed other reprehensible deeds; there was Sally Fairfax, daughter of the Rev. Bryan Fairfax; there was grand old Phineas Janney, the Quaker.

Janney was for some years president of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, an idea which originated with Washington. Every year he banqueted the directors and friends. One day a stranger who was present, having got away with two plates of venison, asked for a third. Holding out his plate he said:

"Mr. Janney, your venison is delicious. I am going to ask you for a bit more. Cut and come again, you know."

The old Quaker eyed him grimly, as he filled his plate:

"Friend, cut thou mayest, but come again thou never shalt."

Sally Fairfax was a prophecy of the future, who died lamentably when less than 17 years old. The parson's daughter was a young lady of promise. Adam, a Negro boy, had killed her kitten, and of him she remarked: "That wretch, son of a gun," and pledged to "get even with him yet." The record, mischievously incomplete, omits the sequel. But, such language!

Alexandria was important. Thence stretched the westward trail which became the melancholy legend of Braddock's route. It may be followed pretty closely today. It goes to Will's Creek (Cumberland) and then across the mountains to Great Meadows and up to the neighborhood of Ft. DuQuesne (Pittsburgh).

The best of many places to note it is near Addison, Pa., four miles from the Maryland state-line. Addison clings absurdly to a thin ledge on the stiff side of Keyser's Ridge. It is possible to stand beneath poplars or in the corridor of magnificent chestnuts which line its single street and see where George Washington and, later, Washington and Braddock, emerged from the deadly nightshade of the mountain forest and beheld the valleys of heroism and defeat ahead. Even though the famous Ft. Necessity still lay behind Chestnut Ridge, which is toward Uniontown, the tired soldiers packing across this stiff range well might sigh with relief at Addison

It is only a few yards off the road. Over the way is a despairing fence, that long has yielded its ideals and relaxes ungracefully into the insinuating arms of a magnificently negligent hedge; behind the hedge, great inter-locking fruit-trees; and behind the fruit-trees, perhaps a block and a half, runs a significant depression.

That is Braddock's road.

It is covered with heavy under-growth and arched by trees. Nature has done her best to obliterate it, but not even nature can destroy the depression that harassed men wore painfully and tediously into the bosom of the earth, as they carved a way through those wicked forests and hills, while behind those trees and bushes eyes watched and hands itched to slay and scalp the straggler.

Ft. Necessity is Mt. Washington to the tourist; on either side he sees magnificent farms and rich fields. In fact, it is only the presence of tablets marking the Fort and Great Meadows, where the baffled Braddock died, that recall those grim and stirring preparatory scenes. There is also the grave of Braddock, pathetically elevated to one side of the trail, with even the four sentinel hemlocks, graciously planted to shield it, standing crookedly as if in sympathy with the stubborn, contrary, brave old bones that lie beneath.

George Washington, who led the party to recover the remains of Braddock from their hasty burial in the center of the

trail he had made, did not neglect his opportunities at Ft. Necessity. Among the lands he took up were 200 acres which later passed by purchase to a man named Fazenbaker. This purchaser's descendant, Walter Fazenbaker, still lives in Addison and still owns the 200 acres. He is not rich, but refuses to sell this splendid heritage.

"I am not that hard up," he says, in dry, conclusive accents.

This whole country, platted vaguely by these early American real estate speculators, is very rich; rich with fine, well watered soil, and rich with coal veins.

The story of Braddock's trail is significant because it formed an integral part of colonial ambition, in the individual sense. There was involved not only the defense of lands already occupied, but the defense of lands conjecturally held by grant or promise; and there was always the obvious opportunity to take up new holdings whose desirability was revealed along the line of march or adjacent to it. The rich valley of the Ohio represented the future fortune of almost every colonist with a fortune yet to build, and it represented large additions to baronies already founded.

Washington was only one with all his contemporaries in staking out claims. He had a good eye for such things, an eye educated by his surveying work. Lord Fairfax gave him that opening, and an early survey of the Town of Belhaven (later called Alexandria), made in 1749, is in Washington's own penmanship.

Alexandria saw all these comings and goings of armed men. There met the trail north and south, and the trail west across the mountains. It was a substantial place. The old grave digger of Alexandria, John Nightingail, who was long-lived, left the testimony that: "There was a right smart chance of people here in 1799."

* * *

Dumfries had fallen on naked days; Quantico Creek had lost its maritime flavor. Business moved to Great Hunting Creek and Alexandria. Alexandria built boats; was a tax-port; was the end of the rolling-roads from the plantations; had vast warehouses. Carlyle had an underground passage from his dock to his cellars. Alexandria was the county seat. It was part of a New World, of close-knit interests. It got spunky and when poor King George refused to sign a bill that would have brought the adjoining marsh under drainage con-

trol, the derisive Alexandrians promptly christened the menace to health, "King George's Meadows."

That was to be expected from a prospering, up and coming community, whose inns saw the greatest in the land as they passed up and down the country over the King's Highway; who had sent troops into the mountains and received back their wounded again; who had created out of a difficult new land a civilization which already strangely blended a lordly arrogance and an astounding spirit of common opportunity; which regulated even its remaining inequalities by law and would proceed only by the letter of it.

Old shadowy Jamestown; gay and respected Williamsburg; leisurely, fragrant Fredericksburg; busy, horse-swapping Alexandria, with its commerce and shipping: All were the elements of successive growth in a new age stirring in the womb of time. A fundamental healthy-mindedness impelled the townspeople to protect the poor and care for the public health; and likewise moved the Barons to a mellowing humanity which wiped from the great estates the eviler phases of feudalism. The farms on the estates sent their produce to the town markets; the Barons themselves, usually practical men, took occasion to look the market over now and again, to compare price and quality. A unity in this vast little world of colonial America was hopefully and dangerously binding together a people whose diverse origins were forgotten in a common future. When the moment came, the towns and villages looked to the great river for leadership, and democracy's strangest army fought democracy's strangest war.

* * *

It was Tench Tilghman who, on Oct. 19, 1781, galloped up the High Road from Yorktown, flinging out the message:

"Cornwallis is taken!"

It was no longer the King's Highway.

Inevitable.

Upper: The Great Falls of the Potomac. Left: A glimpse of the rapids. Right: The old Chesapeake and Ohio canal, near the Great Falls. Lower: A characteristic view of the canal, planned by Washington to open up commerce with the Ohio Valley.

CHAPTER IX

AND SO—TOWARD THE WEST!

OPPORTUNITY was generous with the Barons. To do them credit, they did not ignore her. When frontier wars carried them westward, they usually cast a careful eye over the land and, if possible, added a few thousand acres to the family holdings. All through the early history there runs this tremendous clamor for land and, for most of those with such desires, the Ohio Country represented an El Dorado. There were always claims before the colonial governments; claims by the soldiers of land for services, and the difficulty of finding precisely where the land was, and the further difficulty of finding that someone else, red or white, was holding it. The narrative is a long and bitter one, and most of the men whose names are known to the history of the baronial era figured in it.

The commercial side of the Barons' character showed itself most conspicuously in the organized effort to provide communication with "the West." Here Washington naturally would be found in the lead. Washington, gentleman by inherited instinct, surveyor by practice, realtor by the force of opportunity, always had his feet on the ground. He was a practical man.

From the docks at Mount Vernon his tobacco crop went forth, often with misgivings about the returns, to England in exchange for the needs of life in Virginia—a new carriage, fine clothes, ornaments for the house. But Washington's speculative investments lay in the West, along the rich valley of the Ohio; and the practical man asked himself how that inland empire could be brought to Chesapeake Bay and thence across the ocean to world markets. So, pondering, the idea for the "Old Canal" was born. He believed such a canal could be cut through from the Chesapeake to the Ohio.

It was then, naturally, the new canal, and the proposal meant as much to the last quarter of the Eighteenth Century as the building of the Erie Canal did to the first quarter of the Nineteenth. In its day it was a stream of gold, so burdened was it with the wealth of the regions it tapped. Today it is merely picturesque. Nothing of importance travels it, except

the fish boat or the home-made raft. It is beautiful. It is historic. It is useful only for its modest water-power.

Now, this whole project was one of many conceived in the practical mind of Washington. The planter, ruling his Potomac barony like a feudal lord and visioning incalculable estates vaguely acquired or in process of title beyond the mountains, had dreamed more than once of carrying on commerce, by means of the Potomac, with the western country, of which the Ohio River was then the frontier.

He was familiar, more so than most men of his time, with the resources and the obstacles. The Potomac, in the lower reaches, the James, the York, all those fingers of the Chesapeake Bay as well, were the arteries of pleasure and commerce, far more suitable at that time than the mire of newly hacked out roads.

The chief obstacle to Washington's dream of inland commerce was formed by the rapids and falls of the Potomac; the same broad, struggling torrent that now draws a million of visitors every summer; whose stubborn shores are strewn always with the remnants of 10,000 picnics, and on which a fortune in films has been expended by the undiscouraged amateur photographer.

It is a strange and beautiful place, ornamented with more than sixty species of trees, with adjacent rambles of exquisite charm; but it interrupts the navigable flow of the river.

Washington busied himself and so was made chairman of the committee formed to organize the Potomac Canal Company, in which he became a stockholder at a time when he could not "receive pecuniary compensation for any services rendered his country in its arduous struggle with Great Britain for its rights." But he did permit the legislature of Virginia, says Charles Moore, to bestow upon him James River and Potomac River canal shares, to be held for public uses. The canal shares had a par value of $200,000, and Washington thought they would go higher. In his will he designed these shares to form an endowment for a national university. But the canal shares lost value subsequently. George Washington's faith in them is shown by his expressed wish to employ them to educational ends and also by his recommendation in his will "to such of the legatees as could make it convenient to take each a share of his stock in the Potomac Company" because he was "thoroughly convinced that no uses to which the money can be applied will be so productive as the tolls arising from

this navigation when in full operation (and this from the nature of things must be ere long) and more especially if that of the Shenandoah is added thereto."

For political and economic reasons, remarks Charles Moore, Washington exerted every influence at his command—time, money, and persuasion—to open up the western country by canals extending back from tidewater through the mountains. Had he lived until the days of railroads, he would have been equally enthusiastic over that improved method of transportation. He sought the end by every practical means. It is only within the past year or two that the canal from Washington to Cumberland has sunk from a bearer of traffic to a purveyor of water-power on a small scale.

Washington, then, organized the Potomac Canal Company, and was requested to direct a study of the river, it being the company's determination to build a canal that should bring the treasures of the upper valleys down to the lower Potomac, Chesapeake Bay and the ocean. On August 3, 1785, Washington closely examined the rapids, announcing that he was convinced the water of the falls "is of sufficient depth for good navigation and as formidable as I had conceived them to be," but that the project was by no means impracticable.

Two years before this he had gone over the whole ground; in fact he left the Continental camp at Newberg before peace was declared to make a long, dangerous tour up the Mohawk Valley. He returned filled with enthusiasm and much impressed with a discerning Providence "which has dealt its favors to us with so profuse a hand." He vowed to make a western exploration trip, for there was now rooted in him a dream of empire, and to the commercial problem it represented he virtually gave himself up. The western trip proved even more interesting. He was discontented to find some of his lands had fallen into the hands of "Land Jobbers & Speculators" who, he was informed, had included them in surveys and were offering them for sale "regardless of my legal & equitable rights, Patents, & ca;" but beyond this he now conceived the mouth of the Potomac as the gateway for all inland commerce which by any means could be diverted from the Yankee north. He picked Detroit as the point "thro' which the Trade of the Lakes Huron, & all those above it, must pass, if it centres in any State of the Union" and carefully tabulated on paper the routes and mileage from Detroit to Alexandria (three routes, one jealously avoiding Pennsylvania), Detroit to Richmond, De-

troit to Philadelphia, Detroit to Albany, and Detroit to Montreal and Quebec.

The route from Detroit to Alexandria, avoiding Pennsylvania, was to the mouth of the Cuyahoga, 125 miles; the carrying place with Muskingham river, 54; portage, 1; the mouth of Muskingham, 192; the little Kanhawa, 12; up the same, 40; portage to the West Branch, 10; down Monongahela to Cheat, 80; up Cheat to Dunker Botm., 25; portage to North Branch Potomac, 20; Fort Cumberland, 40; Alexandria, 200; a total of 799 miles. The route by Fort Pitt he found only 607.

Considering that "The Ohio River embraces this Commonwealth from its Northern, almost to its Southern limits . . . & lyes nearly parallel to our exterior, & thickest settled Country" it seems a logical connection with a canal, and he feels able to state "The more then the Navigation of Potomack is investigated, & duely considered, the greater the advantages arising from them appear."

He observes that "hitherto, the people of the Western Country having had no excitements to Industry, labour very little;—the luxuriancy of the Soil, with very little culture, produces provisions in abundance—these supplies the wants of the encreasing population . . . but let us open a good communication with the Settlements west of us—extend the inland Navigation as far as it can be done with convenience—and show them by this means, how easy it is to bring the produce of their Lands to our Markets, and see how astonishingly our exports will be encreased; and these States benefitted in a commercial point of view—wch alone is an object of such Magnitude to claim our closest attention—but when the subject is considered in a political point of view, it appears of much greater importance."

With all this in his mind Washington worked toward the organization plan and, following the study of the rapids as described earlier, he evolved a plan for a first section of the canal 2,400 yards long. Within ten weeks of the day when Washington commenced his study of the river the work on the canal was begun. This section was built. The work on the canal then dragged along for thirty-six years by which time $750,000 had been expended, mostly borrowed.

Its later story involves the reincorporation as the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, the awakening of Baltimore to the fact that it would or might rob that "queen city" of the rich trade it had enjoyed from stage-coach and freighter, and the astound-

ing resolve to construct the Baltimore & Ohio Rail Road. There was the great legal dispute over right of way near Harper's Ferry, with the canal holding the whip hand, but the railroad more confident of the future. The money kept going, and each canal estimate shocked its supporters and maddened its enemies. It became the professional beggar of two states.

Yet, for all that, the canal was a remarkable piece of progress, even when only the stretch around Great Falls was completed. The plan possessed many elements of genius, as Baltimore recognized only too well. It actually became possible to carry on trade with the West, even as far as the Missouri River, Mobile, and Lake Erie. One inevitable result was the swollen importance of Georgetown, which became a port of entry and, partly thereby, was a substantial community and a preferred residential neighborhood when the City of Washington was a village in the wilderness, stubbornly trying to justify itself as the Federal seat.

At the port of Georgetown, which now sleeps so complacently on its challenging hill, duties amounting to $620,000 were collected between 1790 and 1821. Fifteen thousand boats, averaging twelve tons each, carried merchandise valued at $10,000,000. Tolls collected on them amounted nearly to $125,000. This was, considering time and circumstances, big business. Certainly the impetus and employment the canal represented were no small contribution to a nation which needed just these things to make its new consciousness effective.

It was 1828 before the canal was completed to Cumberland, along the banks of the Potomac. The traveler on the train gets long glimpses of canal, river and national highway, the canal and river in particular keeping each other company through miles of lovely scenery.

Most visitors are content to inspect the old canal in the neighborhood of Great Falls, where the picturesque old inn stands beside the lock-gates. The temptation is to cross over and explore that delightful woodland which juts out to the rim of the Falls. But the tow-path in either direction is well worth following; the walking is easy—there are no automobiles nor signal lights, but many flowers and tangled bushes and happy-looking trees. The old whitewashed houses which lean over the locks are superbly a part of the picture, and nature has added a noble adornment that frames and sometimes clothes them with splendid unmolested age.

There is a good road along the canal all the way from Georgetown to the Chain Bridge, but why anyone should motor along it for pleasure—except when bound deviously for Virginia and points south—is a mystery. The tow-path can be reached at the Francis Scott Key bridge. Actually that is right in town; and immediately you touch the tow-path you are no longer in town at all; natural groves link the canal and river, varying with the contour of the Potomac, but more precise where the canal runs its direct course.

The further you walk toward Chain Bridge the more interesting it becomes. The Virgina side across the river becomes a great wall of green. On the canal side a curiously detached life pursues a quiet course, although on Sundays the fisherman and picnicker make mild holiday there. But the canal-side dwellings, those across the road beside the canal, seem to look over the heads of all these frivolities and gaze musing at the Virginia hills.

There are so many shady spots, so many restful patches of quiet water beneath wide drooping trees, so many shapely depressions of grass inviting that sort of meditation which the eye pursues through the roof of a forest, that it seems quite natural to find, as you can, fishermen who sleep while they fish, and boats that seem to nose their own way into just the right sort of elbow for forty, or perhaps fifty, winks.

A little beyond Chain Bridge is Little Falls; across Chain Bridge is a gorgeous hill-side. Toward Great Falls the old canal grows wistfully narrow, and nature has thinned it even more by her prodigality of vegetation. Sometimes the eye measures the width of the lock and speculates on the manner of boat that could squeeze through it. Yet here is the proper ancestor of the Soo, and the little barge of the old canal has fathered the indescribably sinister-appearing Great Lakes freighter. The year 1785 is not yesterday, and not all ideas live so long and so justifiably.

There it stretches, that straight, competent waterway that George Washington literally paced off and laid out with hand extended toward the locked up West. Eloquent and imaginative, and a beautiful memento of human endeavor. The last testament, but one, of the Barons.

Upper: The City of Washington, viewed from Georgetown Heights in 1800. Left: The Francis Scott Key house. Right: Martha Parke Custis, granddaughter of Martha Washington and famous hostess of Tudor Place (shown below).

CHAPTER X

DEMOCRACY'S FIRST COURT

GEORGETOWN was Democracy's first court; the patina of its "royalty" lies visibly upon it.

It is easy to miss it. The much-traveled road to Great Falls lies down Pennsylvania avenue and along the foot of Georgetown's hill. The University at the top can be visited, virtually without a glimpse of the real Georgetown.

One good way is to turn off Massachusetts onto Q street. There is a kink which leads across a handsome little bridge guarded by four sculptured bison. The Q street becomes Georgetown, and Q street, Georgetown, is—or was—Quality street. You pass Bellevue and Tudor Place and are on the crown of the hill, whence quiet old streets stretch away past houses that look as if they could, if asked, tell many interesting things.

When Washington was a village in the wilderness, Georgetown was a substantial community. The occupants of its great houses looked down, figuratively and literally, on the swamp beyond the creek. Those who could afford to do so, established residence in Georgetown on the heights. Gloomy tales are told of the swampy pilgrimages at night from some of these homes to the Capitol and the dwellings adjacent to it. Carriages sometimes lost their way and wandered for hours; statesmen were compelled to lower their dignity into the mud and make what path they might; party leaders received severe contusions and even lacerations. But Georgetown reigned and for long was to Washington what Windsor and its castle are to London.

Georgetown was settled toward the close of the Seventeenth Century. It was laid out as a town in 1751, and received its charter as a city in 1789. It was almost a century before it was merged in the District of Columbia, and a full century, lacking one year, when it was formally annexed to the City of Washington.

Several factors contributed to Georgetown's eminence. First, of course, was its geographic advantage: fine, high ground right at the confluence of the Potomac River and Rock Creek. In very early days it was a base from which the

priests made their heroic missionary overtures toward the Indians and, in time, the focusing of Roman Catholic activities there added importance to the growing community. The monastery and the Academy of Visitation date from 1799. Ten years before that, the Roman Catholic academy, which was to become years later Georgetown University, was founded.

Within easy view from the hill is the site of the brick house in which Francis Scott Key lived for some years. His memory is enshrined in the great bridge leading to the Virginia shore and to Fairfax Court House and Falls Church. Terracing the hillside down toward Rock Creek is the cemetery where sleeps John Howard Payne. Mrs. E. D. N. Southworth, the novelist, lived in Georgetown.

When the Federal Capital was fixed at Washington, Georgetown took on new social importance, to which the commerce of the Potomac Canal added a satisfactory material growth, Georgetown becoming a port of entry for the western lands—as then understood. It was this social significance that gave to Georgetown its great mansions and its suggestive streets. Few places are less disturbed in the essential qualities of gracefully ageing house-fronts and unmolested avenues of trees. It is difficult to decide, in all such colonial centers, whether to lift the eyes and admire the mansions or to puzzle out the straight, warm-colored, thin-shouldered houses along the streets whose gardens are rich and tangled with perennial blooms.

But the great events of those days were in the great houses, several of which still exist and lord it to a certain extent. Bellevue, a graceful colonial home right on Q street, has been taken over by the Colonial Dames for a headquarters. The great house of Georgetown, Tudor Place, is just beyond, standing majestic in the center of a vast square, and still pridefully withdrawn in a vain compromise between a country estate and a lordly town mansion.

Tudor Place was built, in great part, from a portion of the estate left by George Washington, the portion that went to Martha Parke Custis, one of the four grandchildren of Martha Washington. Martha Custis became Mrs. Thomas Peter. The Peters were substantial figures in Georgetown society and knew everybody who deserved to be known, including Dr. William Thornton, the architect of the Capitol, the Octagon House, and other notable places. Thomas Peter, like Thomas Law and Robert Morris, speculated in Wash-

ington real estate; but unlike those unfortunates, he prospered. Apparently the Peters themselves built the wings, and the inheritance completed the building with its central portion. In those days, the site was beyond the platted portion of Georgetown. It enjoyed a superb view of the busy river and wharves; and of course there was a garden, with the inevitable maze.

Tudor Place seems to have been completed the year of Waterloo. Charles Moore, the most dependable and far-seeking of all commentators on the Washington family, notes that the Peter children became historic memoranda, when the one born in 1815 was named Britannia Wellington and another was christened America. Mrs. Peter was a notable, and Tudor Place then and for many years was as much a Court as anything in America. Lafayette, who had known Martha Parke Custis as a girl at Mount Vernon, hastened straight from his call on the President to Tudor Place to pay his respects.

There is a peculiar fragrance about these visits of Lafayette, here, at Mount Vernon, at Fredericksburg. His mementoes linger. Tudor Place has some of them, and also among many relics a pair of purple satin slippers, trimmed with silver lace. They belonged to a notable bride, none other than Martha Custis on the day she became the wife of George Washington.

It was left to Britannia Wellington Peter to carry on the tradition of the house, and right well she held her court. She lived to within a day of 96 years, all spent at Tudor Place; and, since her daughter married a cousin Peter, the descendants of the original stock still live there. Mr. Moore says of the reign of Mrs. Peter (Martha Parke Custis) that "in her own person, in her spacious mansion, and in her not ungracious aloofness, she represented the Federalist dynasty. When that dynasty was rudely overturned by the election of Thomas Jefferson instead of General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, the Washington family almost despaired for the life of the republic."

And of such were the topics and discussions in the Georgetown drawing rooms of those days.

Britannia married Commodore Beverly Kennon, U. S. N., and when Mrs. Kennon "came to the throne" and ruled at Tudor Place, she carried on, says Mr. Moore, who knew her during the last decade of her life, the old traditions. "Whether or not she feared lest, during the Civil War, Tudor Place might

go the way of Arlington, at least she averted such a calamity by renting the mansion to Union Army officers. The war over, she resumed her throne and occupied it during the remainder of her life. For sixty-seven years of her life she was a widow."

It was Martha Washington's will that gave to her granddaughter, Martha Peter, "my writing table and seat to it standing in my chamber." It is a lamented fact that Mrs. Washington destroyed virtually all her husband's correspondence with her. The only two of these letters extant, written by Washington to his wife after their marriage, were found in this desk.

The one most frequently quoted reads, beautifully, as follows:

Philadelphia, April 23, 1775.

My Dearest:

As I am within a few minutes of leaving this city, I could not think of departing from it without dropping you a line, especially as I do not know whether it may be in my power to write again till I get to the camp at Boston. I go fully trusting in that Providence, which has been more bountiful to me than I deserve, and in full confidence of a happy meeting with you some time in the fall.

I have not time to add more as I am surrounded with company to take leave of me. I retain an unalterable affection for you, which neither time nor distance can change . . . With the utmost truth and sincerity

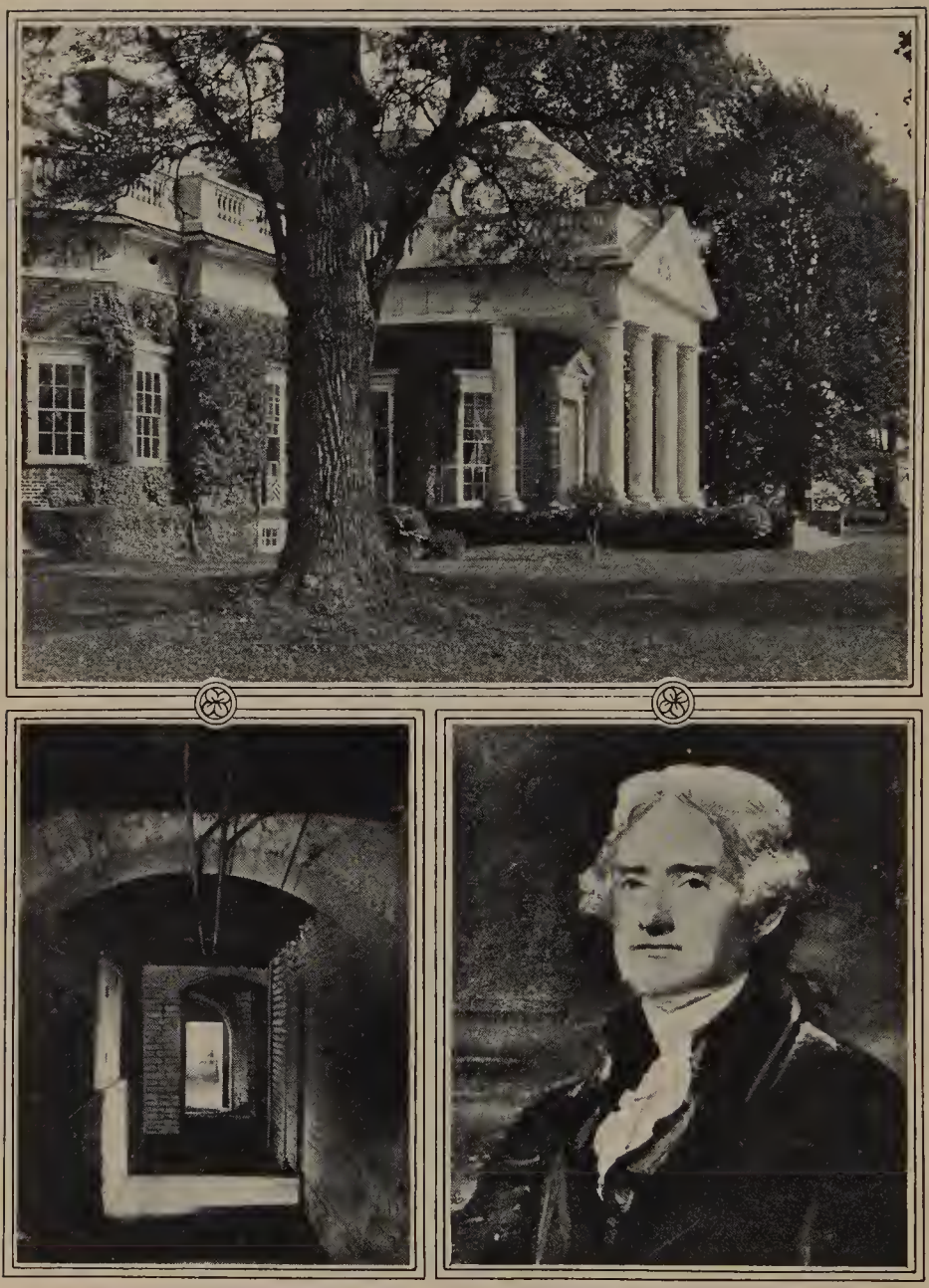
Yr entire,

G. WASHINGTON.

There is something in this document which flutters across time that stills the tongue and the pen.

In "The Family Life of Washington," Mr. Moore, describing the faded lavender satin of the bridal slippers, and the tarnished and torn silver lace, remarks, "But what a sense of personality clings to them and to the filmy stockings and fans and card-plates and the hundred other intimate belongings of this consort and her companion."

There are other great houses at Georgetown the Magnificent; in particular Oak Hill, which stands up the hill behind it. But Tudor Place is the fragrance of democracy at its birth, and Georgetown is a casket of precious metal, studded with precious stones, some rich and large, some old and worn, but all exceeding dear to this nation.



Upper: Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson, near Charlottesville. Lower left: A subterranean corridor connecting the slave quarters at Monticello with the house. Right: Thomas Jefferson.

CHAPTER XI

VIRGINIA MEMORIES AND MILESTONES

VIRGINIA has never been merely a geographical expression; it is, as the trite saying goes, a state of mind. It is more than that, a flavor, the distillation of many generations into the essence of noblesse oblige. Those who know Virginia may not know the Virginians; and those who know not Virginians can never comprehend the history of two wars.

Many years ago an old lady of Virginia, having prepared her young daughter for a visit "North," admonished her thus:

"Honey, don't you mention you're from Virginia—that would be like talking about money in front of folks that are po'. We mustn't parade our 'dvantages."

Another lady of Virginia, riding with some obscure companions in the Piedmont Valley, lost her handkerchief, which the wind, blowing from the Blue Ridge, snatched from her hands.

"Shall we stop?' asked an anxious companion.

"No!" exclaimed the lady of Virginia, with a gesture of pure nonchalance. "No! We Virginians have everything in the world—except money! And we don't give a damn!"

For the first quotation above, that brilliant and charming Virginian, Marietta Minnigerode Andrews, is responsible. The author of the second doesn't matter. I will quote Mrs. Andrews a little more, from her clever book, "Memoirs of a Poor Relation":

". . . In Virginia we still speak of ourselves as US. Mankind is divided into two parts—US and the others. This small pronoun has a meaning that should be fraught with terror to interlopers, but they seem hardly to grasp its portent; they meet us frankly, as if they were just as good as we are, though they may hail from Ohio or Maine—remote places mentioned as a courtesy in the geographies, but of no real importance. It is difficult to give these unfortunates a conception of their true status—not of US—only by persistent effort and with a benign compassion and gentleness can we force this knowledge upon them.

"As business, duty or pleasure have sent me during later

years back and forth throughout our country, the friendly admiration and toleration towards the Southerner surprises and touches me. It is not pleasant to come in contact with those who claim superiority, especially superiority in birth and breeding; and I think it is because fate has left us so little else to brag about, that we do often find ourselves guilty of this lack of taste. Who resents it? No one—people smile, agree with us, offer to our ancestors that incense which is so dear to our own nostrils, invite us to their beautiful parties, marry our poor sons to their rich daughters, buy our run-down Colonial and Georgian houses and restore them, gratefully and gleefully adopting our traditions! . . . It is largely due to the rest of the world that he (the Virginian) is so pleased with himself!"

There is an outer door to Virginia which swings open to the passing tourist as he scurries over the land seeking to invest a split second of time at a shrine; there is an inner door to Virginia which opens only to the familiar voice on the threshold. The two Virginias are in no wise the same. The Virginia of the outer door is a series of tablets and turnstiles, of ever-multiplying museums and heavily emphasized legends, of carefully scheduled routes that run through corridors of gleaming filling stations, unromantically spaced with barbecue stands. The inner Virginia hides far back from the concrete pike, is thrice concealed by devious lanes, by groves, by sloping hillsides, and the language and the manners to be found therein are those of the oil paintings on the walls.

I think me of a sweet June Sunday at Vaucluse, which is within sight of the oak groves of Seminary Hill. They are grand oaks; by a special mercy preserved during the Civil War when the Federals burned off the original Vaucluse, the original Muckross, and many and many a grove charged with treacherous conspiracy against an uneasy capital so obviously dominated by the hill. The Seminary was a hospital.

At first there was church. And what church could it be other than old Christ Church, down at Alexandria, with its stiff pews and eloquent memories. After that, up the road they came and swept cautiously around the curving drive; a touch of the military, the statesman, the gentleman of leisure, fragrant ladies of slow speech, until the wide hall was filled and overflowing. It was visiting time, as Virginia alone knows it. Beyond a fringe of woods and across the head of a shady ravine, a little open theater, quite simple, its boards much

worn. Little children of the household in graceful steps, the statesman impromptu, the gentleman of leisure, a fragrant lady slow of speech, the while a pleased and interested audience sat in judgment, to be itself judged within the space of the little hour. There was no other world but this; the bright-eyed little lady on her throne on the stage, commanding with her peremptory cane the obedience of all. The simplicity of it, the charm, the swift, unspoken binding together of happy people . . .

This is when you pass the inner door. . . . It is not well to speak of Arlington. A well-intentioned Northerner mentioned it to a sweet-faced gentle Southern lady; a pity it is so bare; such a fine house; should be furnished as a typical Southern mansion; its present condition is depressing and disappointing to those who visit the interior. . . .

The sweet-faced, gentle lady became rigid, and her eyes were flames.

"The South," she said, calmly, deliberately, unanswerably, "wishes Arlington naked!"

The South is potentially rich. William J. Robertson, in his realistic survey of "The Changing South," writes: "In a most astonishing way she has risen out of the wilderness of waste and poverty in which the Civil War left her, and between 1880 and 1927 has built for herself a territory that offers all that is to be desired by the modern man. Within her borders are climates unexcelled and scenery that matches Switzerland's in beauty. According to one's tastes one can find in the Southland health-giving mountains, great stretches of fine sea-beaches, beautiful river valleys, rolling hills and plains that beckon to the travelers of the world.

"Beneath these varying terrains are to be found resources whose value is enough to maintain the Nation for centuries without the aid of other sections of the Union. Added to these she is able to offer all the mechanical comforts and pleasures that any other portion of America offers. Her economic growth has been colossal, her industrial expansion has been amazing; but with it all she is static politically, and until recently has been backward culturally. . . ."

Probably Mr. Robertson was not singling out the State of Washington, Jefferson, Monroe, Patrick Henry, Marshall and an army of others when he made the political reference, although it is true he writes in terms of present-day realism.

There is no present-day realism in Virginia. No Virginian

"to the manor born" would descend to it. There is a very distinct realism of spiritual fulfilment, and vivid emphasis on the realism of character, and an exact analysis of the realism of conduct, to name the steps inversely. Mr. Robertson writes of the necessary and I, perforce, write of the intangibles. For that reason I ask what are those fields of snow moving in the June sun, and discover they are millions of ox-eyed daisies. For that reason I ask whence goes that crooked hedge-laced road, and find it leads to the wide terrace of a concealed mansion and its three hundred acres. For that reason I scan great blue tapestries against the wall of the cottage and perceive them closer to be giant larkspur; for that reason I gaze at the shimmering mystery of the encircling hills, indigo when the sun falls away, and know them to be the Blue Ridge that looked just so when the Barons gazed, as ever, toward the promise of the West.

Fairfax and its Court House are only the door to Virginia. True, the old Court House gives instant pledge of historic consistency. Washington's will is in the nearby building (for greater fire-protection), and Martha's, and Mason's, and many another. I copied the preamble of Mason's will. Mason, I suspect, copied his mentally from the prayer-book. It begins:

"I, George Mason of Gunston Hall in the parish of Truro and county of Fairfax, being of perfect and sound Mind and Memory and in good health, but mindful of the uncertainty of human Life and the imprudence of a man's leaving his Affairs to be settled upon a death bed, do make and Appoint this my last Will and Testament—My soul I resign into the hands of my Almighty Creator, whose tender mercy's are over all his works, who hateth nothing that he hath made, and to the Justice and Wisdom of whose Dispensations I willingly and cheerfully submit humbly hopeing from his unbounded Mercy and benevolence, thro' the Merits of my blessed Savior, a remission of my sins—My Body I desire may be decently buried at the Descretion of my Exors herein after named, close by the side of my Dear and ever lamented wife—and as for all the worldly Estate with which it has pleased God to bless me, I dispose of it in manner and form following.

"Imprimis . . ."

They are building a new court house at Fairfax.

For many Virginians Fairfax was on the road to Washington, the miry village-capital. Thomas Jefferson wrote anxiously to Madison:

"From Songsters I tried the road by Ravensworth, which comes into the turnpike road four and a half miles below Fairfax courthouse. There are about two miles of it which, I think cannot be passed by your carriage without over-setting; and consulting with Colonel Wren, who knows both roads, he says there is no comparison, that you must absolutely come to Fairfax court-house, all that road being practicable till you come to Little's lane, which you have to encounter whatever way you come. I passed it yesterday, a wagon being then stuck fast in it, nor do I suppose any four-wheeled carriage could then have got through the spot where the wagon was without stalling. But two days of wind and sun will by tomorrow make immense odds in it, so that I hope you will be able to pass it. . . .

"I spoke of the difficulties of your getting up the Bull Run Hill. They agreed to take each a horse and draw your carriage up. Accept their offer by all means, as however steady your horses they will be in the utmost peril of balking, and should they once begin there are other hills sufficient to make them give you a great deal of vexation. The Bull Run Hill is really the worst I ever saw on a public road. Still, let nothing tempt you to go by Centerville, as on that route the whole is cut by wagons into mud holes."

It is a sparkling road today, this precarious highway of Jefferson's times. It has great hedges, and painted fields and melancholy woods, and the road runs on through the open heart of the land.

Prisoners work on the road. You know them for prisoners because beside the hedge sits an un-uniformed man with a careless gun. The prisoners smile and do not look as if they intended to bolt. The man looks wistful, does not smile, and seems to think they will not bolt either. He is long and lean and sad.

You are near the Loudoun Pike, the oldest pike laid out in Virginia. If you take the right turn you will pass The Plains, twist through Halfway and come to Middleburg. These villages "off the route" are the very kernel of Virginia. Did these same folk live here always? Always; living, and re-living, generation after generation, if not here, close by, living and returning over a land dear and familiar to its meanest chimney.

A little bit more off the highway, down a lane, and there is an old cemetery. A cemetery of repose. Nature has carpeted everything with wild strawberries; the grave-lots have

been blanketed by the same protecting hand. It is a quiet, remote repose, looking from its slope toward the hills of youth and eternity. In the center a shielded arbor, its stones preciously guarded by trees whose arms reach down and over them. Surely here one might rest. On one little patch of ground are a boy and a girl; the girl, straight as a sapling, mows the grass, the boy, a little chap, rakes.

The girl remarks, without emphasis, that help is impossible to get. It is grandmother's grave. The girl wears a spotless print dress; her eyes are as straight as her figure, and both are beautiful; her face is clear-skinned; her hair simply drawn to either side. Her erect carriage, as she walks away from her labor of love is that of a princess, and the tiny boy trots protectingly beside her, insisting on carrying the rake, as a gentleman should. They belonged to the quiet place with its ageing stones which bear the mighty names of Virginia's great families; belonged with the shady blooms, the carpet of strawberries, the placid sun-lit hills and the poignant, murmuring breath of unmolested sleep.

* * *

You take the Little Rivers pike to Middleburg and The Plains, and come, between waving fields, to Gordonsdale and the new Belvoir. Long before reaching Gordonsdale, you spy its prodigious box hedge, a noble hedge, high, thick and massive. Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Vickers live there. The great hall has marvelous old charts and maps; there are no closed doors. The hostess greets everyone who comes in the name of friendship and the house has that air about it which seems to say that it is lived in.

Within sight of Gordonsdale is the new Belvoir, handsome seat of the Fairfax Harrisons, descendants of the famous Lord Thomas. It is a magnificent jewel of a palace that, contrary to popular belief, according to Mrs. Harrison, is not built on the plans of the original Belvoir of the Potomac. This jewel, nevertheless, set in the glory of a vast Virginia landscape, is worthy of its inheritance. It has its rose garden and its formal lawns, and its sculptures and its vines, so that one may become pleasantly lost and obscured within the limits of the ordered walks.

On its walls are a notable collection of oil paintings, almost a complete and graphic history of a family and an era never to be forgot.

Here, too, there is hospitality, and a mellow, shady library, with rare books and precious objects and always, the wide

welcoming fireplace. From the crest of this hill the country stretches away until it is a veil of blue haze; it is, in fact, a world, rimmed in by those hills, proud, remote and beautiful.

For all of that the heart lingers most wistfully at Oakley, the house whose homeliness is vital with human experience. It is the home of H. Rozier Dulany, a name to conjure with both past and present. It is so old, and every foot of it, lawn and brick and timber, so rich with silence. The great hall, with its noble staircase, is the temple of the guest. Beneath its rug is yet the discoloration of Civil War bloodstains. Behind it is the tender little cemetery; around it and over it are the grandest trees in all Virginia; beyond it are golden fields, glistening thoroughbreds, acres and acres and acres, until the thin yellow line of field is lapped by the indigo haze of the mountains.

The back porch seems very old, as well it might; the house seems to have things it would whisper if one could sit there at night with nothing but the moon sifting through its many windows. Warm, generous house, with a spirit unchanged and unchangeable, descending on all who live there and touching hopefully those who chance to set foot in it.

There is Winchester, which splendidly disdains the brazen-eyed traffic lights; a loveable town; there is Charlottesville, with its thin streets and benediction of history . . . and there is Monticello.

* * *

It is often quoted: "All my wishes end, where I hope my days will end, at Monticello. Too many scenes of happiness mingle themselves with all the recollections of my native woods and fields, to suffer them to be supplanted in my affection by any other."

Thomas Jefferson was born in a house named for Shadwell, a dismal part of London, whence had come Peter Jefferson's wife. Shadwell was a little more than four miles from the inconsequential village of Charlottesville, on the Rivanna River, just above its junction with the James. A mile and a half away rises that abrupt, wooded hill, which Thomas Jefferson, a young man, chose for his future home. On this "little mountain" he built his beloved home. It was 30 years in the building, and he was its creator. He was the architect and the landscape gardener. It was all his. Thence he watched through a glass his University of Virginia rising, stone by stone, under his plans, at Charlottesville. Then he gazed afar off and meditated on the shapes of hills and the mysteries of

light. Thither came the pilgrims from all the world to visit the "sage of Monticello" in his pointed shoes and red plush waistcoat.

Said the Duke de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, enemy of Robespierre and Marat: "His house will certainly deserve to be ranked with the most pleasant mansions in France and England."

Wrote Jefferson (February, 1811): "I am retired to Monticello, where in the bosom of my family and surrounded by my books, I enjoy repose to which I have been long a stranger. My mornings are devoted to correspondence, from breakfast to dinner I am in my shops, in my garden, or on horseback among my farms; from dinner to dark I give to society and recreation with my neighbors and friends; and from candle light to early bedtime I read . . . I talk of ploughs and harrows, of seeding and harvesting, with my neighbors; and of politics, too, if they choose, with as little reserve as the rest of my fellow citizens, and feel at length the blessing of being free to do and say what I please without being responsible for it to any mortal."

He was then 67. Monticello had 5,000 acres and 113 slaves; his other estate, Poplar Forest, had more than 4,000 acres with 85 slaves. Dwindling resources crippled his latter days and interrupted his plans for embellishing the noble home he had carved out of the summit of a mountain. He tried to let some of his land to farmer-tenants, with poor success. The public subscribed some money. . . .

After his death, his family was in great distress. Monticello was advertised for sale as being worth $71,000 and containing 409 acres. It was sold for $7,000. The new owner, apparently oppressed by the spiritual presence which still inhabited it, deserted it, and the noble house drooped. It was advertised again. It was sold, the great house and 218 acres of land, for $2,500. The purchaser, at his death, willed Monticello to the people of the United States, but heirs broke the will. In the original sale the little burial plot where rested Jefferson and those belonging to him, by blood or friendship, was reserved; the heirs attacked that also.

Congress passed a small appropriation to restore and protect the burying ground, and the work was done, but the public had no access to it. There is a letter to a member of Congress from Sarah Randolph, great granddaughter of Jefferson, on this subject which no American may read without mortification.

Finally loyal and devoted men and women organized themselves and contracted to purchase Monticello, its 650 remaining acres, its contingent buildings, the furnishings and relics for $500,000. The public as it pilgrimages up that steep mountain side to one of the noblest homes ever built by man, contributes its mite or its much, as it likes.

The lawn was constructed by leveling off the peak. On one portico is the famous "compass" which moves on order from the weather-vane on top of the house. In the grand hall is the eight-day tower clock brought to America by Jefferson from the hands of a Swiss clockmaker; there is the folding ladder on which to climb to wind this monster of the hours, and the balls which daily record the day of the week on the wall. There is an old gig, wherein Jefferson rode from Monticello to Philadelphia that he might set pen to paper and write that certain document which begins: "When in the course of human events. . . ."

It is a house with a hundred vistas, and sits on the top of the world. The world was Virginia, whose highways across which rode and tramped the world's great men, led always to these wide doors.

From among those glistening roofs of Charlottesville, seen below, came the cavalcade escorting Lafayette; here on this brilliant lawn walked the broken gallant Frenchman, worn by confinement in the dungeon of Olmutz. Down these steps from the portico hastened eagerly the feeble, tottering Jefferson to embrace and be embraced. And the mountain shone in the glory of the day. For it was on the top of the world.

It is fair enough to view the subterranean passage which brought the slaves from their concealed quarters to the house. It is pleasant to gaze at the little law-office, perched on the edge of the green cliff, or on the trim and romantic honeymoon-cottage on the opposite side of the lawn. It is significant to look long at this and that trifle dear to vanished hands.

There is in all of it the flavor of an heroic age, which was the corner stone of a new nation of free people. From the sea to the mountains, from the river of the north to the rivers of the south, there they lived out lives so wondrously placed on the threshold of a new civilization. There are two Virginias: there is an outward Virginia which develops its resources fast; there is an inward Virginia which, led by the grace of Providence, changeth never. Intangibles . . . memories and milestones.

CHAPTER XII

FULLFILMENT OF A PROPHECY

A GROUP of men stood on the fringe of a hillside and looked across the Potomac. There flowed the river, gathering in the waters of Rock Creek, of Tiber Creek, of the Anacostia; beyond the river were mud flats and marshes.

At the mouth of the Anacostia was a village known as Carrollsburg. Up beyond Tiber Creek, a scattering of shacks called Hamburg; straight in front and behind the tidal-flats curved Duddington's Pasture; behind Hamburg and stretching to Rock Creek was the Widow's Mite, separated from the Potomac by Mexico. Back of all these, the forest gently sloped up over Jamaica, Mt. Pleasant, Port Royal, Beall's Levels, Abby Manor, Hop Yard, Sherwood and Mill Tract.

The group of men surveyed the river and flats, the pastures and the forest, and said: "Here shall be the capital of the American nation."

So the City of Washington was built.

* * *

George Washington and Thomas Jefferson really decided this. They called in Madison. All went to Gunston Hall and talked it over with George Mason. And someone thought of Pierre Charles L'Enfant, whose memory grows romantic with the passing of time. L'Enfant had been in the provisional military service of France and came to this country in the train of Lafayette. He built Ft. Mifflin on the Delaware, and the fort proved unconquerable. He was skilful as a designer of fortifications, and Washington, who forgot nothing, remembered L'Enfant. When the Congress of the United States met in New York's City Hall, L'Enfant remodeled the building to meet the occasion. Later he made over the Federal House in Philadelphia.

To L'Enfant, Washington and Jefferson entrusted the task of drawing up plans for the "new federal town."

With what eyes did these men look across the river at that wilderness? With what vision did they contemplate the city that was to rise? With what prophetic imagination did they discern the grandeur that was to come as the inheritance from the vanished feudalism?

Upper: View of Washington, from Arlington, as designed in the Plan of 1901. This plan governs the physical development of the Capital. Left: Pennsylvania Avenue just before the Civil War. Right: Pierre L'Enfant, who planned the city. Lower: Washington, from Arlington, about 1800.

For they laid out a tract the size of Paris.

That was yesterday.

Today? There is a forest of 100,000 trees. Its Gothic arches still roof the earth for miles. But its royal corridors are leaf-vaulted halls of glistening facades and pillared entrances. From a girdle of trees shines a dome, a terraced roof, a noble figure; grand stairways, stern and beautiful monuments to the Day that Is; bathed in leaves and sunshine, etched by tree-limbs and shadows.

The city, nested in its forest, is the capital whereof those men dreamed. It is Washington—the unfinished city.

* * *

The early vicissitudes of the national capital are familiar history. The long wrangle over a location reads absurdly enough today, with the congressional log-rolling for this and the other obscure place in which individual members had an interest. Yet to many the final site was a mudhole, a "Capital of Miserable Huts," a "City of Magnificent Distances," another "Great Serbonian Bog," through whose marshy environs unwilling legislators and officials made what manner of progress they could to the partly-erected Capitol and temporary offices.

L'Enfant corrected Jefferson's idea of a chess-board regularity of squares by inserting numerous avenues running at acute angles. He was given the task of executing it, but seems to have been difficult to get along with. The incident of record that brought his dismissal by Washington arose over the sale of lots, for which L'Enfant was instructed to furnish his plan for engraving. He declined to do so, saying that speculators would buy up the choice lots and "permanently disfigure the city by huddles of shanties."

Out of a job, he was paid $2,500 and a lot near the executive mansion. Washington retained the plans, but L'Enfant hotly protested receiving either money or ground. He also refused Madison's tender of the chair of engineering at West Point. He designed many buildings in Philadelphia and was given the task of constructing the present Ft. Washington on the Potomac. Again he got into trouble with his superiors and was dismissed. His later years saw him a discontented and somewhat pathetic figure, haunting the halls of Congress and importuning its members for a reward for his services.

To Andrew Ellicott, L'Enfant's assistant, fell the duty of executing the famous plan. When in 1901 Senator James

McMillan, of Michigan, caused the appointment of a committee of distinguished architects and planners to study the project anew, these experts decided unanimously that the L'Enfant design is peerless, and that Washington has been beautified only when that plan has been followed and has lost valuable opportunity every time it has been departed from.

From that day to this there has been a determined effort to fulfill the original L'Enfant plan. When the Fine Arts Commission came into existence, the plan became a matter for their special protection, and staunchly they stood by it. During the first years the duty had its difficulties, but the determination of such men as Roosevelt and Root as well as McMillan, virtually fixed the plan as inevitable for all time.

The pivotal points in the L'Enfant plan were the Congress House and the President's House. Through the United States Capitol run the north and south, and east and west lines that divide the District of Columbia into four formal sections. From the Capitol to the Executive Mansion runs Pennsylvania avenue, intended to be a noble thoroughfare, with a double vista. President Jackson, when he located the United States Treasury, interrupted the view of the Capitol from the White House. Later the construction of the Library of Congress closed Pennsylvania avenue and prevented that thoroughfare from making an approach to the east of the Capitol.

The east and west line running through the Capitol is the axis of the general plan. At the Potomac end the beautiful Lincoln Memorial is placed, and the new bridge running from the Lincoln Memorial to the foot of Arlington, in line with the Lee house, is really an extension of that axis.

The Washington Monument is slightly off line, regrettably, due to lack of funds when the monument was initiated, for the extensive foundations needed at the marshy point on the axis. Had the monument been correctly placed it would have interrupted exactly the line from Capitol to Lincoln Memorial and another line drawn at right angles from the monument would have passed through the White House.

From the Capitol west, a Mall was designed, its borders to be nobly patterned with the great public buildings. Here, again, in the matter of location of edifices, a definite order was prescribed. The Capitol forms a center for one subordinate but related group, of which the Library of Congress, the House and Senate office buildings, the projected Supreme Court, and even the strikingly handsome railroad station are units.

The White House forms the center for another group, appropriately executive in character. It was intended to group public buildings subordinate to the Chief Executive around Lafayette Square, but private interests have interrupted, to a certain extent, this proper design. Whatever progress is made in this direction will be forced to include, for example, in the middle of Government structures the rather impertinent building erected by the National Chamber of Commerce.

The Washington Monument dominates the Mall group, whose buildings begin near the executive, then yield to departments and bureaus with which the public has direct concern, and end with the monumental buildings devoted to the great national collections. Also dominated by the monument are the statuary of the Mall and Potomac Park.

Within the compass of the plan briefly outlined all important development has taken place.

When, in 1901, the nation made its supreme attempt to recapture its capital and give it the matchless development planned for it by the first citizens, the first problem was to clear the Mall. Two obstacles were there, one a very large and difficult one, the other a relatively small matter. The difficult problem was the existence of railroad tracks and the developed intentions of the railroad to expand the usefulness of these lines. The lesser problem was the placing of the Botanic garden at the head of the Mall, under the shadow of the Capitol, so that from that day to this no one can drive from the Capitol direct into the Mall, but has to detour in either direction.

The difficult problem was solved immediately. A patriotic president of the Pennsylvania Railroad agreed not only to removal of the tracks, but to the erection of a suitable terminal station. Both these things were done.

Chronologically the next two tests of the Washington plan were the placing of the new buildings of the Department of Agriculture and the location of the Lincoln Memorial. The victory for the plan in both instances absolutely fixed the line of development as L'Enfant laid it out, modified only, as it should be, by the necessities of a new age and the unparalleled expansion in Government.

Gradually the Mall outlined itself. The new National Museum went up; the lovely Freer Gallery and its fine collection was opened to the public. The new Archives Building was laid out, and gradually the Mall side of Pennsylvania

avenue, at its more western end is yielding to the construction of needed Government buildings.

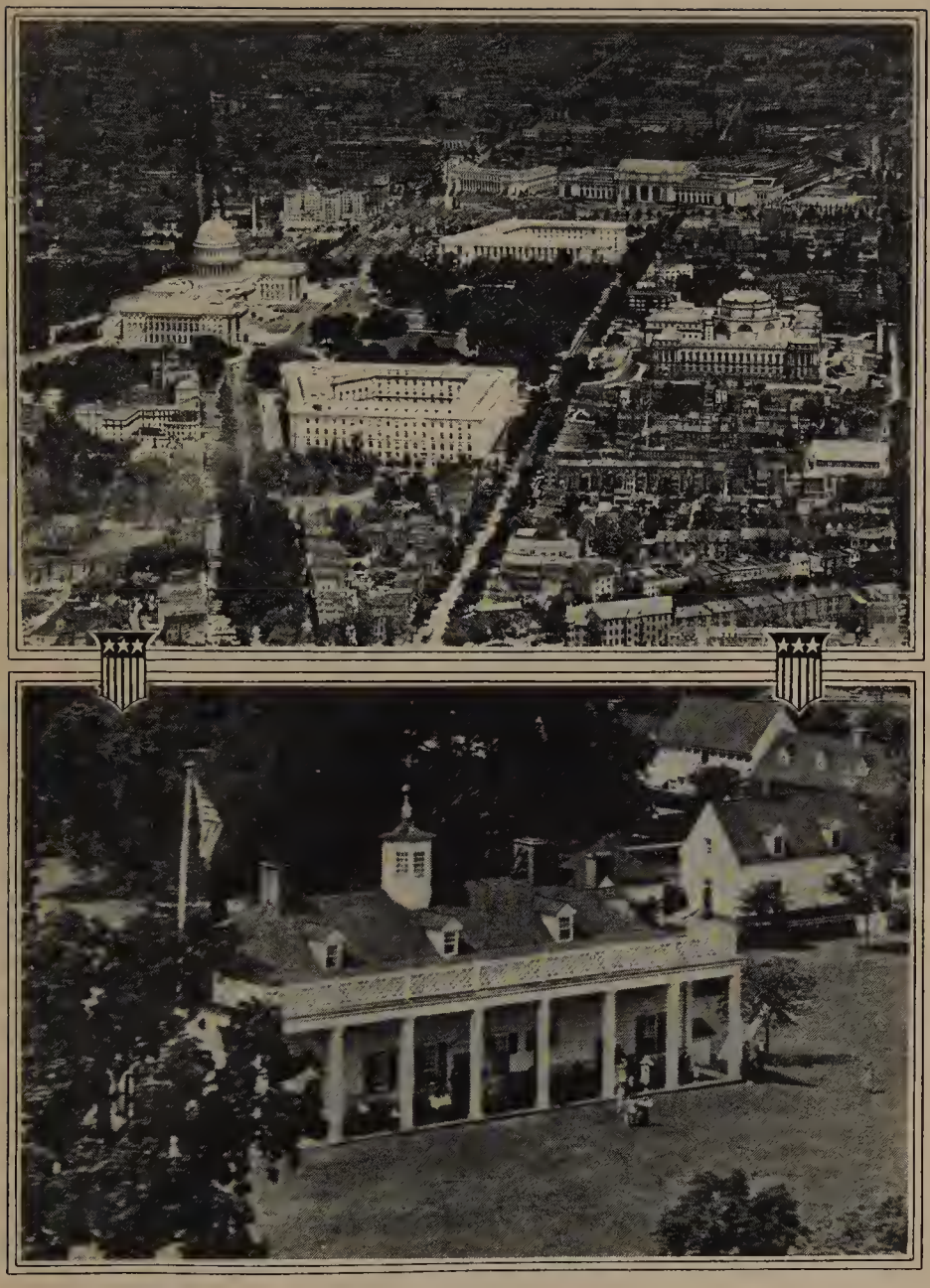
It is slow work, due in part to the inherent tardiness of national impetus where the work goes on from one lifetime to another, and in part to the inevitable maneuvering of self-interest which quarrels over realty values and the like. This sort of thing has blocked the creation of a Roosevelt Monument which the Fine Arts Commission would like to see at the summit of the last hill far out on Sixteenth street—a peerless setting. Then, again, the legal complications over the rights in the Chesapeake and Potomac Canal Co. delay the physical connection between Rock Creek and Potomac Parks, for which the Government has the land; obviously the linking up, along Rock Creek, of these two magnificent parks will make a drive of unparalleled grandeur.

Nor do the plans end there. The Botanic Garden exists nominally to furnish cut flowers for the tables of Congressmen. Chief objections to its removal have come from the wives of legislators, who fear for the loss of this perquisite.

Yet official Washington has challenged this permanence by planting the great Grant Monument and the Meade Monument in that garden. Now, the base of the Grant Monument is intended to be used for a reviewing stand; that is the reason for its gracefully-balanced base, stretching to either side. It can not fulfil its purpose so long as the Botanic Garden remains. Moreover, it has been suggested that the wide reclaimed ground formerly usurped by James Creek, which is between the Capitol and the river, is available for a new Botanic Garden which, together with the existing wide thoroughfare, if suitably planted, would serve to link up the Capitol gardens (yet to be created) and the grounds of the Army War College.

This is a well-considered plan and might well be carried out without delay. With the Botanic Garden removed to a new location, which it, in turn, would beautify and develop, the Mall itself would stretch to the feet of the Capitol. There would then remain for disposal only the hideous temporary war buildings that grill the Capitol end of the Mall, thrust themselves out toward the flank of the Lincoln reflecting basin and despoil the Government landscape between the Union Station and the Capitol.

Of all the plans under consideration for the National Capitol—and there are a score unmentioned here—these to which attention is called are feasible and of prime importance.



Upper: Capitol area of the City of Washington, as it is today. Contemplated developments include the removal of ugly temporary buildings, appropriate landscaping of the vacated land, and construction of a separate edifice for the Supreme Court.
Lower: The river-view front of tree-girt Mt. Vernon.

Some years ago visitors to Washington could be numbered; today they are innumerable, but the known figures show annually a minimum equal to a metropolis. The total swells yearly, in proportion as the great American population becomes mobile with its motor cars, in addition to railroad inducements for excursions and stop-overs. It is the one supreme Mecca for the American; it is the capital city, devoted singly to the public business. Virtually every inhabitant of the District and its environs revolves around the Government. Moreover time and wisdom yearly create a little more of this gigantic monument to the foresight of the past and the good taste of the present. Hideous mistakes have been made; you can find them in outlying Washington. But the fundamental plan of the Government area builds intrepidly toward its full realization.

Within a short space of time—in 1932—the nation will celebrate the bicentennial of George Washington's birth. In that year the American people will pour down every highway, over every railroad track, on a pilgrimage of pride and remembrance. They will make for three spots, conspicuously: the at present neglected birthplace at Wakefield, the home at Mt. Vernon, and the city whose lines were indicated by the strong man and his associates, the last of the American Barons.

Of Mt. Vernon there is no need to speak. It is cared for with distinguished success by a patriotic society of fine women. It remains only to build, as part of the bicentennial celebration, the Mt. Vernon highway from the end of the new Peace Bridge to the last home of Washington. Of the two proposed routes, the one along the water-front is the one with greater appeal to the imagination and possessing more scenic opportunities. It would be placed on the river side of the railroad tracks, would traverse Alexandria on historic Washington street, leaving between itself and the Potomac only land suitable for estates; thus there would be eliminated forever any considerable cross-traffic.

For Wakefield much is to be done, and much of it is in the doing. The dilapidated pier, inconveniently located and now unsafe, will soon be a thing of the past and a new one, more suitably placed, will invite the pilgrims to make the enviable approach by river. The tombs of the Washingtons—at least four generations—will receive much needed care and protection; the land surrounding them is to receive the landscaping for which it begs; the monument now, so far as can be learned,

nowhere near the actual site of the house in which Washington was born, may be removed to a likelier spot. The nearest railroad station is 40 miles away, at Fredericksburg, and the highway at that town is the nearest paved road.

Today America is surprised and shocked when it makes its visit of remembrance thitherward and finds such embarrassing neglect of the birthplace of its first President.

An ambitious association exists to remedy these things, and seeks Government co-operation. Most of the needed improvements are in sight, just as in case of the City of Washington the purposeful influence of President Herbert Hoover drives the great project of completing the capital forward faster than it ever has moved before.

The public instinctively focuses its interest on the three possible things:

The Mt. Vernon river highway.

The restoration of Wakefield and its availability to the public.

The completion, in the City of Washington, of as much of the L'Enfant plan as is practicable.

When all is said, there is no monument that can be builded like this great city. It ends the days of the Barons, but it begins the age of a great nation; and the men who planned it belonged to both eras! Its history goes on today and tomorrow. It is the embodied genius of the nation—*Res Publica.*

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